AN

ESSAY

ON

EPIC POETRY.

[Price 10s. 6d.]

AN ESSAY ON EPIC POETRY;

IN FIVE EPISTLES TO THE REVD. MR. MASON.

WITH NOTES.

——— *Vatibus addere calcar*
Ut studio majore petant Helicona virentem. HOR.

BY WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

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EPISTLE

THE FIRST.

A R G U M E N T

OF THE FIRST EPISTLE.

Introduction.—Design of the Poem to remove prejudices which obstruct the cultivation of Epic writing.—Origin of Poetry.—Honors paid to its infancy.—Homer the first Poet remaining.—Difficulty of the question why he had no Successor in Greece.—Remark of a celebrated Writer, that as Criticism flourishes Poetry declines.—Defence of Critics.—Danger of a bigoted acquiescence in critical Systems—and of a Poet's criticising his own works.—Advantages of Friendship and Study of the higher Poets.

EPISTLE I.

PERISH that critic pride, which oft has hurl'd
Its empty thunders o'er the Epic world;
Which, eager to extend its mimic reign,
Would bind free Fancy in a ſervile chain;
With papal rage the eye of Genius blind,
And bar the gates of Glory on the mind!
Such dark decrees have letter'd Bigots penn'd *,
Yet ſeiz'd that honor'd name, the Poet's Friend.
But Learning from her page their laws will blot;
Scorn'd be their arrogance! their name forgot!
Th' indignant Bard, abhorring baſe controul,
Seeks the juſt Critic of congenial ſoul.
Say! MASON, Judge and Maſter of the Lyre!
Harmonious Chief of Britain's living Choir,

* Ver. 7. See NOTE I.

Say! wilt Thou listen to his weaker strains,
Who pants to range round Fancy's rich domains;
To vindicate her empire, and disown
Proud System, seated on her injur'd throne?
Come! while thy Muse, contented with applause,
Gives to her graceful song a little pause,
Enjoying triumphs past; at leisure laid
In thy sweet Garden's variegated shade,
Or fondly hanging on some favorite Oak
That Harp, whose notes the fate of Mona spoke,
Strung by the sacred Druid's social band,
And wisely trusted to thy kindred hand!
Come! for thy liberal and ingenuous heart
Can aid a Brother in this magic art;
Let us, and Freedom be our guide, explore
The highest province of poetic lore,
Free the young Bard from that oppressive awe,
Which feels Opinion's rule as Reason's law,
And from his spirit bid vain fears depart,
Of weaken'd Nature and exhausted Art!
Phantoms! that literary spleen conceives!
Dullness adopts, and Indolence believes!

While

While with advent'rous ſtep we wind along
Th' expanſive regions of Heroic ſong,
From different ſources let our ſearch explain
Why few the Chieftains of this wide domain.
Haply, inſpiriting poetic youth,
Our verſe may prove this animating truth,
That Poeſy's ſublime, neglected field
May ſtill new laurels to Ambition yield;
Her Epic trumpet, in a modern hand,
Still make the ſpirit glow, the heart expand.
Be ſuch our doctrine! our enlivening aim
The Muſe's honor, and our Country's fame!

Thou firſt and faireſt of the ſocial Arts!
Sovereign of liberal ſouls, and feeling hearts,
If, in devotion to thy heavenly charms,
I claſp'd thy altar with my infant arms,
For thee neglected the wide field of wealth,
The toils of int'reſt, and the ſports of health,
Enchanting Poeſy! that zeal repay
With powers to ſing thy univerſal ſway!
To trace thy progreſs from thy diſtant birth,
Heaven's pure deſcendant! dear delight of Earth!

Charm of all regions! to no age confin'd!
The prime ennobler of th' aſpiring mind!
 Nor will thy dignity, ſweet Power! diſdain
What Fiction utters in her idle ſtrain,
Thy ſportive Friend! who, mocking ſolemn Truth,
Tells her fond tales of thy untutor'd youth.
As wrong'd Latona (ſo her tale begins)
To Delphos travell'd with her youthful twins;
Th' envenom'd Python, with terrific ſway,
Croſs'd the fair Goddeſs in her deſtin'd way:
The heavenly parent, in the wild alarm,
Her little Dian in her anxious arm,
High on a ſtone, which ſhe in terror trod,
Cried to her filial guard, the Archer God,
Bidding with force, that ſpoke the Mother's heart,
Her young Apollo launch his ready dart;
In meaſur'd ſounds her rapid mandate flow'd,
The firſt foundation of the future Ode!
Thus, at their banquets, fabling Greeks rehearſe *
The fancied origin of ſacred Verſe:

* Ver. 77. See NOTE II.

And

And though cold Reaſon may with ſcorn aſſail,
Or turn contemptuous from their ſimple tale,
Yet, Poeſy! thy ſiſter Art may ſtoop
From this weak ſketch to paint th' impaſſion'd group.
Though taſte refin'd to modern Verſe deny
The hacknied pageants of the Pagan ſky,
Their ſinking radiance ſtill the Canvaſs warms,
Painting ſtill glories in their graceful forms;
Nor canſt thou envy, if the world agree
To grant thy Siſter claims denied to thee;
For thee, the happier Art! the elder-born!
Superior rights and dearer charms adorn:
Confin'd ſhe catches, with obſervance keen,
Her ſingle moment of the changeful ſcene;
But thou, endu'd with energy ſublime,
Unqueſtion'd arbiter of ſpace and time!
Canſt join the diſtant, the unknown create,
And, while Exiſtence yields thee all her ſtate,
On the aſtoniſh'd mind profuſely pour
Myriads of forms, that Fancy muſt adore.
Yet of thy boundleſs power the deareſt part
Is firm poſſeſſion of the feeling Heart:

No progeny of Chance, by Labor taught,
No ſlow-form'd creature of ſcholaſtic thought,
The child of Paſſion thou! thy lyre ſhe ſtrung,
To her parental notes ſhe tun'd thy tongue;
Gave thee her boldeſt ſwell, her ſofteſt tone,
And made the compaſs of her voice thy own.
To Admiration, ſource of joy refin'd!
Chaſte, lovely mover of the ſimple mind!
To her, though ſceptics, in their pride, declaim,
With many an inſult, on her injur'd name;
To her, ſweet Poeſy! we owe thy birth,
Thou firſt encomiaſt of the fruitful Earth!
By her inſpir'd, the earlieſt mortal found
The ear-delighting charm of meaſur'd ſound;
He hail'd the Maker of a world ſo fair,
And the firſt accent of his ſong was prayer.
O, moſt attractive of thoſe airy Powers,
Who moſt illuminate Man's chequer'd hours!
Is there an Art, in all the group divine,
Whoſe dawn of Being muſt not yield to thine?
Religion's ſelf, whoſe provident controul
Takes from fierce Man his anarchy of ſoul,

She o'er thy youth with fond affection hung,
And borrow'd music from thy infant tongue.
Law, sterner Law, whose potent voice imprest
Severest terror on the human breast,
With thy fresh flow'rs her aweful figure crown'd,
And spoke her mandate in thy softer sound.
E'en cold Philosophy, whom later days
Saw thy mean rival, envious of thy praise;
Who clos'd against thee her ungrateful arms,
And urg'd her Plato to defame thy charms;
She from thy childhood gain'd no fruitless aid,
From thee she learnt her talent to persuade.
Gay Nature view'd thee with a smiling glance,
The Graces round thee fram'd the frolic dance:
And well might festive Joy thy favor court;
Thy song turn'd strife to peace, and toil to sport.
Exhausted Vigor at thy voice reviv'd,
And Mirth from thee her dearest charm deriv'd.
Triumphant Love, in thy alliance blest,
Enlarg'd his empire o'er the gentle breast;
His torch assum'd new lustre from thy breath,
And his clear flame defied the clouds of death.

But of the ſplendid train, who felt thy ſway,
Or drew exiſtence from thy vital ray,
Glory, with fondeſt zeal, proclaim'd thy might,
And hail'd thee victor of oblivious Night.
Her martial trumpet to thy hand ſhe gave,
At once to quicken, and reward the Brave:
It ſounds—his blood the kindling Hero pays,
A cheap and ready price for thy eternal praiſe!
Tho' ſelfiſh Fear th' immortal ſtrain deride,
And mock the Warrior's wiſh as frantic pride!
Ye gallant, hapleſs Dead of diſtant time,
Whoſe fame has periſh'd unembalm'd in rhyme,
As thro' the deſert air your aſhes fly,
In Fancy's ear the nameleſs atoms cry,
" To us, unhappy! cruel Fates refuſe
" The well-earn'd record of th' applauding Muſe."
Bleſt are thoſe Chiefs, who, blazon'd on her roll,
Still waken virtue in each kindred ſoul;
Their bright exiſtence ſtill on earth prolong,
And ſhine for ever in the deathleſs ſong.
Yet oft Oblivion, in a treacherous ſhade,
Has ſunk the tuneful rites to Valor paid;

Her palſied lips refuſing to rehearſe
The ſacred, old, traditionary verſe.
  As well the curious eye, with keen deſire,
Might hope to catch that ſpark of vital fire,
Which firſt thro' Chaos ſhot a ſudden light,
And quicken'd Nature in its tranſient flight;
As the fond ear to catch the fleeting note,
Which on the raviſh'd air was heard to float,
When firſt the Muſe her Epic ſtrain began,
And every liſt'ning Chief grew more than Man.
  But, as the Ruler of the new-born day
From Chaos roſe, in glory's rich array;
So from deep ſhades, impenetrably ſtrong,
That ſhroud the darken'd world of antient ſong,
Bright HOMER burſts, magnificently clear,
The ſolar Lord of that poetic ſphere;
Before whoſe blaze, in wide luxuriance ſpread,
Each Grecian Star hides his diminiſh'd head;
Whoſe beams departed yet enchant the ſight,
In Latium's ſofter, chaſte, reflected light.
  Say ye! whoſe curious philoſophic eye
Searches the depth where Nature's ſecrets lie;

Ye, who can tell, how her capricious fit
Directs the flow and ebb of human wit,
And why, obedient to her quick command,
Spring-tides of Genius now enrich her fav'rite land,
Now ſink, by her to different climes aſſign'd,
And only leave ſome worthleſs weeds behind!
Say! why in Greece, unrival'd and alone,
The Sovereign Poet grac'd his Epic throne?
Why did the realm that echoed his renown,
Produce no kindred heir to claim his crown?
If, as the liberal mind delights to think,
Fancy's rich flow'rs their vital eſſence drink
From Liberty's pure ſtreams, that largely roll
Their quick'ning virtue thro' the Poet's ſoul;
Why, in the period when this Friend of Earth
Made Greece the model of heroic worth,
And ſaw her votaries act, beneath her ſway,
Scenes more ſublime than Fiction can diſplay,
Why did the Epic Muſe's ſilent lyre *
Shrink from thoſe feats that ſummon'd all her fire?
Or if, as courtly Theoriſts maintain,
The Muſes revel in a Monarch's reign;

* Ver. 207. See NOTE III.

Why, when young Ammon's ſoul, athirſt for fame,
Call'd every Art to celebrate his name;
When ready Painting, at his ſovereign nod,
With aweful thunder arm'd this mimic God;
Why did coy Poeſy, tho' fondly woo'd,
Refuſe that dearer ſmile for which he ſued,
And ſee him ſhed, in martial Honor's bloom,
The tear of envy on Achilles' tomb?
In vain would Reaſon thoſe nice queſtions ſolve,
Which the fine play of mental powers involve:
In Bards of ancient time, with genius fraught,
What mind can trace how thought engender'd thought,
How little hints awak'd the large deſign,
And ſubtle Fancy ſpun her variegated line?
Yet ſober Critics, of no vulgar note,
But ſuch as Learning's ſons are proud to quote,
The progreſs of Homeric verſe explain,
As if their ſouls had lodg'd in Homer's brain.
Laughs not the ſpirit of poetic frame,
However ſlightly warm'd by Fancy's flame,
When grave Boſſu by Syſtem's ſtudied laws *
The Grecian Bard's ideal picture draws,

* Ver. 231. See NOTE IV.

And wiſely tells us, that his Song aroſe
As the good Parſon's quiet Sermon grows;
Who, while his eaſy thoughts no preſſure find
From hoſts of images that croud the mind,
Firſt calmly ſettles on ſome moral text,
Then creeps—from one diviſion—to the next?
Nor, if poetic minds more ſlowly drudge
Thro' the cold comments of this Gallic judge,
Will their indignant ſpirit leſs deride
That ſubtle Pedant's more preſumptive pride,
Whoſe bloated page, with arrogance replete,
Imputes to VIRGIL his own dark conceit: *
And from the tortur'd Poet dares to draw
That latent ſenſe, which HORACE never ſaw;
Which, if on ſolid proof more ſtrongly built,
Muſt brand the injur'd Bard with impious guilt.
    While ſuch Dictators their vain efforts waſte
In the dark viſions of diſtemper'd Taſte,
Let us that pleaſing, happier light purſue,
Which beams benignant from the milder few;

* Ver. 244. See NOTE V.

Who, juſtly conſcious of the doubts that ſtart
In all nice queſtions on each finer Art,
With modeſt doubt aſſign each likely cauſe,
But dare to dictate no deciſive laws!
'Tis ſaid by one, who, with this candid claim, *
Has gain'd no fading wreath of Critic fame,
Who, fondly liſt'ning to her various rhyme,
Has mark'd the Muſe's ſtep thro' many a clime;
That, where the ſettled Rules of Writing ſpread,
Where Learning's code of Critic Law is read,
Tho' other treaſures deck th' enlighten'd ſhore,
The germs of Fancy ripen there no more.
Are Critics then, that bold, imperious tribe!
The Guards of Genius, who his path preſcribe;
Are they like Viſirs in an Eaſtern court,
Who ſap the very power they ſhould ſupport?
Whoſe ſpecious wiles the royal mind unnerve,
And ſink the monarch they pretend to ſerve.
No! of their value higher far I deem;
And prize their uſeful toil with fond eſteem.

* Ver. 257. See NOTE VI.

When Lowth's firm ſpirit leads him to explore
The hallow'd confines of Hebraic lore,
When his free pages, luminous and bold,
The glorious end of Poeſy unfold,
Aſſert her powers, her dignity defend,
And ſpeak her, as ſhe is, fair Freedom's friend;
When thus he ſhines his mitred Peers above,
I view his warmth with reverential love;
Proud, if my verſe may catch reflected light
From the rich ſplendor of a mind ſo bright.
Bleſt be the names, to no vain ſyſtem tied,
Who render Learning's blaze an uſeful guide,
A friendly beacon, rais'd on high to teach
The wand'ring bark to ſhun the ſhallow beach.
But O! ye noble, and aſpiring few,
Whoſe ardent ſouls poetic fame purſue,
Ye, on whom ſmiling Heaven, perfection's ſource,
Seems to beſtow unlimitable force,
The inborn vigor of your ſouls defend,
Nor lean too fondly on the firmeſt friend!
Genius may ſink on Criticiſm's breaſt,
By weak dependance on her truth oppreſt,

Sleep on her lap, and ſtretch his lifeleſs length,
Shorn by her ſoothing hand of all his ſtrength.
  Thou wilt not, Mason! thou, whoſe generous heart
Muſt feel that Freedom is the ſoul of Art,
Thou wilt not hold me arrogant or vain,
If I adviſe the young poetic train
To deem infallible no Critic's word;
Not e'en the dictates of thy Attic Hurd:
No! not the Stagyrite's unqueſtion'd page,
The Sire of Critics, ſanctified by age!
The nobleſt minds, with ſolid reaſon bleſt,
Who feel that faculty above the reſt,
Who argue on thoſe arts they never try,
Exalt that Reaſon they ſo oft apply,
Till in its pride, with tyrannous controul,
It cruſh the kindred talents of the ſoul;
And hence, in every Art, will ſyſtems riſe,
Which Fancy muſt ſurvey with angry eyes;
And at the lightning of her ſcornful ſmile,
In frequent ruin ſinks the labor'd pile.
  How oft, my Romney! have I known thy vein
Swell with indignant heat and gen'rous pain,

To hear, in terms both arrogant and tame,
Some reas'ning Pedant on thy Art declaim:
Its laws and limits when his ſovereign taſte
With firm preciſion has minutely trac'd,
And in the cloſe of a deciſive ſpeech
Pronounc'd ſome point beyond the Pencil's reach,
How has thy Genius, by one rapid ſtroke,
Refuted all the ſapient things he ſpoke!
Thy Canvaſs placing, in the cleareſt light,
His own Impoſſible before his ſight!
O might the Bard who loves thy mental fire,
Who to thy fame attun'd his early lyre,
Learn from thy Genius, when dull Fops decide,
So to refute their ſyſtematic pride!
Let him, at leaſt, ſucceeding Poets warn
To view the Pedant's lore with doubt, or ſcorn,
And e'en to queſtion, with a ſpirit free,
Eſtabliſh'd Critics of the firſt degree!
Among the names that Judgment loves to praiſe,
The pride of ancient, or of modern days;
What Laws of Poeſy can Learning ſhew
Above the Critic ſong of ſage DESPREAUX?

His fancy elegant, his judgment nice,
His method eaſy, and his ſtyle conciſe;
The Bard of Reaſon, with her vigor fraught,
Her pureſt doctrine he divinely taught;
Nor taught in vain! His precept clear and chaſte
Reform'd the errors of corrupted Taſte;
And French Imagination, who was bit
By that Tarantula, diſtorted Wit,
Ceaſing her antic gambols to rehearſe,
Bleſt the pure magic of his healing verſe:
With his loud fame applauding Europe rung,
And his juſt praiſe a rival Poet ſung.
Yet, had this Friend of Verſe-devoted Youth,
This tuneful Teacher of Poetic truth,
Had he but chanc'd his doctrine to diffuſe
Ere Milton commun'd with his ſacred Muſe;
And could that Engliſh, ſelf-dependant ſoul,
Born with ſuch energy as mocks controul,
Could his high ſpirit, with ſubmiſſive awe,
Have ſtoop'd to liſten to a Gallic Law;

His hallow'd ſubject, by that Law forbid *,
Might ſtill have laid in ſilent darkneſs hid,
And, this bright Sun not riſing in our ſphere,
Homer had wanted ſtill his true compeer.
  From hence let Genius to himſelf be juſt,
Hence learn, ye Bards, a liberal diſtruſt;
Whene'er 'tis ſaid, by Syſtem's haughty Son,
That what He cannot do, can ne'er be done,
'Tis Fancy's right th' exalted throne to preſs,
Whoſe height proud Syſtem can but blindly gueſs,
Springs, whoſe exiſtence ſhe denies, unlock,
And call rich torrents from the flinty rock.
Let the true Poet, who would build a name
In noble rivalſhip of antient fame,
When he would plan, to triumph over Time,
The ſplendid fabric of his lofty rhyme,
Let him the pride of Conſtantine aſſume,
Th' imperial Founder of the ſecond Rome,
Who ſcorn'd all limits to his work aſſign'd, †
Save by th' inſpiring God who rul'd his mind;

* Ver. 359. See NOTE VII.

† Ver. 377. See NOTE VIII.

Or, like the fabled * Jove, to aſcertain
The doubtful confines of his wide domain,
Two Eagles let him ſend of equal wing,
Whoſe different flight may form a perfect ring,
And, at the point where Senſe and Fancy meet,
There ſafely bold, and though ſublime diſcreet,
His fame's foundation let him firmly lay,
Nor dread the danger of diſputed ſway!

Yet, if the Bard to glory muſt aſpire
By free exertion of unborrow'd fire,
Nor, like the Claſſic Bigot, vainly deem
No modern Muſe can challenge juſt eſteem,
Unleſs her robe in every fold be preſt
To fall preciſely like the Grecian veſt;
If the blind notion he muſt boldly ſhun,
That Beauty's countleſs forms are only one,
And not, when Fancy, from her magic hoard,
Would blindly bring him treaſures unexplor'd,

* Jupiter, ut perhibent, ſpatium quum diſcere vellet
Naturæ, regni neſcius ipſe ſui,
Armigeros utrimque duos æqualibus alis
Miſit ab Eois Occiduiſque plagis.
Parnaſſus geminos fertur junxiſſe volatus;
Contulit alternas Pythius axis aves. CLAUDIAN.

Snap

Snap her light wand, and force her hand to bear
The heavier Compaſs, and the formal Square;
Let him no leſs their dangerous pride decline,
Who ſingly criticiſe their own deſign.
In that nice toil what various perils lurk!
Not Pride alone may mar the needful work;
But foes more common to the feeling nerve,
Where Taſte and Genius dwell with coy Reſerve,
The ſickly Doubt, with modeſt weakneſs fraught,
The languid Tedium of o'erlabour'd thought,
The Pain to feel the growing work behind
The finiſh'd model in the forming mind;
Theſe foes, that oft the Poet's boſom pierce,
Theſe! that condemn'd to fire Virgilian Verſe,
Prove that the Bard, a bold, yet trembling elf,
Should find a Critic firmer than himſelf.
But what fine Spirit will aſſume the Judge,
Patient thro' all this irkſome toil to drudge?
'Tis here, O Friendſhip! here thy glories ſhine;
The hard, th' important taſk is only thine;
For thou alone canſt all the powers unite,
That juſtly make it thy peculiar right:

Thine the fixt eye, which at no foible winks;
Thine the warm zeal, which utters all it thinks,
In those sweet tones, that hasty Spleen disarm,
That give to painful Truth a winning charm,
And the quick hand of list'ning Genius teach,
To grasp that excellence he burns to reach:
Thou sweet Subduer of all mental strife!
Thou Source of vigor! thou Support of life!
Nor Art nor Science could delight or live,
Without that energy thy counsels give:
Genius himself must sink in dumb despair,
Unblest, uncherish'd by thy cheering care.

Nor let the Bard, elate with youthful fire,
When Fancy to his hand presents the lyre,
When her strong plumes his soaring spirit lift,
When Friendship, Heaven's more high and holy gift,
With zeal angelic prompts his daring flight,
And round him darts her doubt-dispelling light,
Let him not then, by Vanity betray'd,
Look with unjust contempt on Learning's aid!
But, as th' advent'rous Seaman, to attain
That bright renown which great Discoverers gain,

Consults the conduct of each gallant name,
Who sail'd before him in that chace of Fame,
Reviews, with frequent glance, their useful chart,
Marks all their aims, and fathoms all their art,
So let the Poet trace *their* happy course,
So bravely emulate *their* mental force,
Whose daring souls, from many a different clime,
Have nobly ventur'd on the sea of Rhyme!
Led by no fear, his swelling sail to slack,
Let him, with eager eyes, pursue the track;
Not like a Pirate, with insidious views
To plunder every vessel he pursues,
But with just hope to find yet farther shores,
And pass each rival he almost adores!

END OF THE FIRST EPISTLE.

EPISTLE

THE SECOND.

ARGUMENT

OF THE SECOND EPISTLE.

Character of Ancient Poets—Homer—Apollonius Rhodius.—Virgil—Lucan.

EPISTLE II.

HAIL, mighty Father of the Epic line,
Thou vaſt, prolific, intellectual Mine,
Where veins of ancient and of modern gold,
The wealth of each poetic world, have roll'd!
Great Bard of Greece, whoſe ever-during Verſe
All ages venerate, all tongues rehearſe;
Could blind idolatry be juſtly paid,
To aught of mental power by man diſplay'd,
To thee, thou Sire of ſoul-exalting Song,
That boundleſs worſhip might to thee belong;
For, as thy Jove, on his Olympian throne,
In his unrivall'd ſway exults alone,
Commanding Nature by his aweful nod,
In high ſecluſion from each humbler God;
So ſhines thy Genius thro' the cloud of years,
Exalted far above thy Pagan peers

By the rich ſplendor of creative fire,
And the deep thunder of thy martial lyre;
The conſcious world confeſſes thy controul,
And hails thee Sovereign of the kindling ſoul.
Yet, could thy mortal ſhape reviſit earth,
How would it move, great Bard! thy ſcornful mirth,
To hear vain Pedants to thy Verſe aſſign
Scholaſtic thoughts that never could be thine;
To hear the quaint conceits of modern Pride
Blaſpheme thy Fancy and thy Taſte deride?
When thus in Vanity's capricious fit,
We ſee thy fame traduc'd by Gallic wit, *
We ſee a Dwarf, who dares his foot to reſt
On a recumbent Giant's ample cheſt,
And, lifting his pert form to public ſight,
Boaſts, like a child, his own ſuperior height.
But neither envious Wit's malignant craft,
Tho' arm'd with Ridicule's envenom'd ſhaft,
Nor fickle Faſhion's more tyrannic ſway,
Whoſe varying voice the ſons of Earth obey,

* Ver. 28. See NOTE I.

Can ſhake the ſolid baſe of thy renown,
Or blaſt the verdure of thy Laurel crown.
Tho' Time, who from his many-colour'd wings,
Scatters ten thouſand ſhades o'er human things,
Has wrought unnumber'd changes ſince thy birth,
And given new features to the face of earth;
Tho' all thy Gods who ſhook the ſtarry pole,
Unqueſtion'd Rulers of the Pagan ſoul,
Are fallen with their fanes, in ruin hurl'd,
Their worſhip vaniſh'd from th' enlighten'd world;
Still its immortal force thy Song retains,
Still rules obedient man and fires his glowing veins;
For Nature's ſelf, that great and conſtant power,
One and the ſame thro' every changing hour,
Gave thee each ſecret of her reign to pierce,
And ſtampt her ſignet on thy ſacred Verſe;
That aweful ſignet, whoſe imperial ſway
No age diſputes, no regions diſobey;
For at its ſight the ſubject paſſions ſtart,
And open all the paſſes of the heart.
'Twas Nature taught thy Genius to diſplay
That hoſt of Characters who grace thy lay;

So richly varied and ſo vaſt the ſtore,
Her plaſtic hand can hardly model more:
'Twas Nature, nobleſt of poetic Guides,
Gave thee thy flowing Verſe, whoſe copious tides
Guſhing luxuriant from high Fancy's ſource,
By no vain art diverted in their courſe,
With ſplendid eaſe, with ſimple grandeur roll,
Spread their free wealth, and fertilize the ſoul.
There are, whom blind and erring zeal betrays
To wound thy Genius with ill-judging praiſe;
Who raſhly deem thee of all Arts the ſire,
Who draw dull ſmoke from thy reſplendent fire,
Pretend thy fancied Miracles to pierce,
And form quaint riddles of thy cleareſt Verſe;
Blind to thoſe brighter charms and purer worth,
Which make thy Lays the laſting joy of earth.
For why has every age with fond acclaim
Swell'd the loud note of thy increaſing fame?
Not that cold Study may from thee deduce
Vain codes of myſtic lore and laws abſtruſe;
But that thy Song preſents, like ſolar light,
A world in action to th' enraptur'd ſight;

That,

That, with a force beyond th' enervate rules
Of tame Philoſophy's pedantic Schools,
Thy living Images inſtruct mankind,
Mould the juſt heart, and fire th' heroic mind.
E'en SOCRATES himſelf, that pureſt Sage, *
Imbib'd his Wiſdom from thy moral page;
And haply Greece, the Wonder of the Earth
For feats of martial fire and civic worth,
That glorious Land, of nobleſt minds the nurſe,
Owes her unrivall'd race to thy inſpiring Verſe;
For O, what Greek, who in his youthful vein
Had felt thy ſoul-invigorating ſtrain,
Who that had caught, amid the feſtive throng,
The public leſſon of thy patriot Song,
Could ever ceaſe to feel his boſom ſwell
With zeal to dare, and paſſion to excel.
In thee thy grateful country juſtly prais'd
The nobleſt Teacher of the tribes ſhe rais'd;
Thy voice, which doubly gave her fame to laſt,
Form'd future Heroes, while it ſung the paſt.
What deep regret thy fond admirers feel,
That mythologic clouds thy life conceal;

* Ver. 85. See NOTE II.

That, like a diſtant God, thou'rt darkly ſhewn,
Felt in thy Works, but in Thyſelf unknown!
Perchance the ſhades that hide thy mortal days
From keen Affection's diſappointed gaze,
And that Idolatry, ſo fondly proud,
With which thy Country to thy genius bow'd,
Might form the cauſe why, kindling with thy fire,
No Grecian rival ſtruck thy Epic lyre;
Perchance, not ſeeing how thy ſteps were train'd,
How they the ſummit of Parnaſſus gain'd,
On thy oppreſſive Glory's flaming pride
Young Emulation gaz'd, and gazing died.
The Muſes of the Attic Stage impart
To many a Votary their kindred art;
And ſhe who bids the Theban Eagle bear
Her lyric thunder thro' the ſtormy air,
How high ſoe'er ſhe leads his daring flight, *
Guides his bold rivals to an equal height.
Of all the Grecian Bards in Glory's race,
'Tis thine alone, by thy unequall'd pace,

* Ver. 119. See NOTE III.

To

To reach the goal with loud applauſe, and hear
No ſtep approaching thine, no rival near.
Yet may not Judgment, with ſevere diſdain,
Slight the young RHODIAN's variegated ſtrain ; *
Tho' with leſs force he ſtrike an humbler ſhell,
Beneath his hand the notes of Paſſion ſwell.
His tender Genius, with alluring art,
Diſplays the tumult of the Virgin's heart,
When Love, like quivering rays that never reſt,
Darts thro' each vein, and vibrates in her breaſt.
Tho' Nature feel his Verſe, tho' ſhe declare
Medea's magic is ſtill potent there,
Yet Fancy ſees the ſlighted Poet rove
In penſive anger thro' th' Elyſian Grove.
From Critic ſhades, whoſe ſupercilious pride
His Song neglected, or his Powers decried,
He turns indignant—unoppreſt by fears,
Behold, he ſeeks the ſentence of his Peers.
See their juſt band his honeſt claim allow,
See pleaſure lighten on his laurell'd brow ;

* Ver. 126. See NOTE IV.

He ſoars the Critic's cold contempt above,
For VIRGIL greets him with fraternal love!
  Hail, thou rich Column, on whoſe high-wrought frame
The Roman Muſe ſupports her Epic fame!
Hail, great Magician, whoſe illuſive charms
Gave pleaſing luſtre to a Tyrant's arms,
To Jove's pure ſceptre turn'd his iron rod,
And made the Homicide a Guardian God!
Hail, wond'rous Bard, to Glory's temple led
Thro' paths that Genius rarely deigns to tread;
For Imitation, ſhe whoſe ſyren ſong
Betrays the ſkillful and unnerves the ſtrong,
Preſerving thee on her perfidious ſhore,
Where many a Poet had been wreck'd before,
Led thee to heights that charm th' aſtoniſh'd eye,
And with Invention's heaven in ſplendor vie.
As Rome herſelf, by long unwearied toil,
Glean'd the fair produce of each foreign ſoil;
From all her wide Dominion's various parts
Borrow'd their laws, their uſages, their arts;
Imported knowledge from each adverſe zone,
And made the wiſdom of the world her own:

Thy patient ſpirit thus, from every Bard
Whoſe mental riches won thy juſt regard,
Drew various treaſure; which thy ſkill refin'd,
And in the fabric of thy Verſe combin'd.
It was thy glory, as thy fond deſire,
To echo the ſweet notes of HOMER's lyre;
But with an art thy hand alone can reach,
An art that has endear'd the ſtrain of each.
So the young Nymph, whoſe tender arms embrace
An elder Siſter of enchanting grace,
Though form'd herſelf with every power to pleaſe,
By genuine character and native eaſe,
Yet fondly copies from her favourite Fair
Her mien, her motion, her attractive air,
Her robe's nice ſhape, her riband's pleaſing hue,
And every ornament that ſtrikes the view;
But ſhe diſplays, by imitative art,
So quick a ſpirit, and ſo ſoft a heart,
The graceful mimic while our eyes adore,
We think the model cannot charm us more:
Tho' ſeen together, each more lovely ſhews,
And by compariſon their beauty grows.

Some Critics, to decide which Bard prevails,
Weigh them like Jove, but not in golden ſcales;
In their falſe balance th' injur'd GREEK they raiſe,
VIRGIL ſinks loaded with their heavy praiſe. *
Ingenuous Bard, whoſe mental rays divine
Shaded by modeſt doubts more ſweetly ſhine;
Thou whoſe laſt breath, unconſcious of the wrong,
Doom'd to deſtruction thy ſublimeſt Song;
How dull their incenſe in thy ſight muſt burn,
How muſt thy ſpirit with abhorrence turn
From their diſguſting rites, who at thy ſhrine
Blaſpheme thy Maſter's name, to honor thine!
More equal tribute, in their ſimpler flowers,
The Poets offer to your ſeparate powers;
For all poetic eyes delight to view
Your different forms, and with devotion due
In each the radiant Delphic God they own,
By beauteous majeſty diſtinctly ſhewn:
But they behold the lofty HOMER ſtand
The bright Coloſſus of the Rhodian land;

* Ver. 190. See NOTE V.

Beneath

Beneath whoſe feet the waves ſubmiſſive roll,
Whoſe towering head appears to prop the pole;
Stupendous Image! grand in every part,
And ſeeming far above the reach of mortal art.
In thee, thou lovely Mantuan Bard, appear
The ſofter features of the Belvidere;
That finiſh'd grace which faſcinates all eyes,
Yet from the copying hand eluſive flies:
Charms ſo complete, by ſuch pure ſpirit warm'd,
They make leſs perfect beauty ſeem deform'd.
O had thy Muſe, whoſe decorating ſkill
Could ſpread rich foliage o'er the leafleſs hill;
Had ſhe, who knew with niceſt hand to frame
The ſweet unperiſhable wreaths of Fame;
Had ſhe, exalted by a happier fate,
Virtue's free Herald, and no Slave of State,
Deck'd worthier ſhrines with her unfading flower,
And given to Freedom what ſhe gave to Power;
Then with more keen delight and warmer praiſe
The world had liſten'd to thy bolder lays;
Perchance had ow'd to thee (a mighty debt)
Verſe where Perfection her bright ſeal had ſet,
Where Art could nothing blame and Nature nought regret.

Of.

Of coarſer form, with leſs pathetic charms,
Hating with Stoic pride a Tyrant's arms,
In the keen fervor of that florid time
When youthful Fancy pours her haſty rhyme,
When all the mind's luxuriant ſhoots appear,
Untrimm'd by Art, by Intereſt, or Fear,
See daring LUCAN for that wreath contend,
Which Freedom twines for her poetic friend.
'Tis thine, thou bold but injur'd Bard, 'tis thine!
Tho' Critic ſpleen inſult thy rougher line;
Tho' wrong'd thy Genius, and thy Name miſplac'd
By vain diſtinctions of faſtidious Taſte;
Indignant Freedom, with juſt anger fir'd,
Shall guard the Poet whom herſelf inſpir'd.
What tho' thy early, uncorrected page
Betrays ſome marks of a degenerate age;
Tho' many a tumid point thy verſe contains,
Like warts projecting from Herculean veins;
Tho' like thy CATO thy ſtern Muſe appear,
Her manners rigid, and her frown auſtere;
Like him, ſtill breathing Freedom's genuine flame,
Juſtice her idol, Public Good her aim,

Well ſhe ſupplies her want of ſofter art
By all the ſterling treaſures of the heart;
By Energy, from Independance caught,
And the free Vigor of unborrow'd Thought.
Thou Bard moſt injur'd by malicious fate,
Could not thy Blood appeaſe a Tyrant's hate?
Muſt He, ſtill gall'd by thy poetic claim,
With falſhood perſecute thy moral fame?
Shall Hiſtory's pen, to aid his vengeance won, *
Brand thee, brave Spirit, as an impious Son,
Who meanly fear'd to yield his vital flood,
And ſought his ſafety by a Parent's blood?
Baſe calumny, at which Belief muſt halt,
And blind Credulity herſelf revolt.
Could that firm Youth become ſo vile a ſlave,
Whoſe voice new energy to virtue gave;
Whoſe Stoic ſoul all abject thoughts abhorr'd,
And own'd no ſordid paſſion as its lord;
Who in the trying hour of mortal pain,
While life was ebbing from his open vein,
Alike unconſcious of Remorſe and Fear,
His heart unſhaken, and his ſenſes clear,

* Ver. 260. See NOTE VI.

Smil'd

Smil'd on his doom, and, like the fabled bird
Whoſe muſic on Meander's bank was heard,
Form'd into tuneful notes his parting breath,
And ſung th' approaches of undreaded death?
Riſe, thou wrong'd Bard, above Detraction's reach,
Whoſe arts in vain thy various worth impeach;
Enjoy that fame thy ſpirit knew to prize,
And view'd ſo fondly with prophetic eyes.
Tho' the nice Critic of faſtidious France
Survey thy Song with many a ſcornful glance,
And as a Goth the kinder judge accuſe,
Who with their great CORNEILLE commends thy Muſe,
Let Britain, eager as the Leſbian State
To ſhield thy Pompey from the wrongs of Fate,
To thee with pride a fond attachment ſhew,
Thou Bard of Freedom, tho' the world's thy foe.
As keenly ſenſible of Beauty's ſway,
Let our juſt iſle ſuch generous honor pay
To the fair partner of thy hapleſs life,
As Leſbos paid to Pompey's lovely Wife. *
Ye feeling Painters, who with genius warm
Delineate Virtue in her ſofteſt form,

* Ver. 293. See NOTE VII.

Let ARGENTARIA on your canvaſs ſhine, *
A graceful mourner at her Poet's ſhrine;
For, nobly fearleſs of the Tyrant's hate,
She mourns her murder'd Bard in ſolemn ſtate;
With pious care ſhe decks his ſplendid tomb,
Where the dark Cypreſs ſheds its ſoothing gloom,
There frequent takes her ſolitary ſtand,
His dear Pharſalia in her faithful hand;
That hand, whoſe toil the Muſes ſtill rehearſe,
Which fondly copied his unfiniſh'd Verſe.
See, as ſhe bends before his recent urn,
See tender Grief to Adoration turn.
O lovely Mourner, could my Song beſtow
Unfading glory on thy generous woe,
Age after age thy virtue ſhould record,
And thou ſhould'ſt live immortal as thy Lord.
Him Liberty ſhall crown with endleſs praiſe,
True to her cauſe in Rome's degenerate days;
Him, like his Brutus, her fond eye regards,
And hails him as the laſt of Roman Bards.

* Ver. 296. See NOTE VIII.

END OF THE SECOND EPISTLE.

EPISTLE

THE THIRD.

ARGUMENT

OF THE THIRD EPISTLE.

Sketch of the Northern and the Provençal Poetry.—The most distinguished Epic Poets of Italy, Spain, Portugal, France, and England.

EPISTLE III.

BLEST be the hand that with a generous care,
To the bright Crown which Learning loves to wear,
Reſtores the Gem, whoſe luſtre, faint and pale,
Died in the fold of dark Oblivion's veil.
Such praiſe, O MASON! to the Bard is due,
In whoſe fraternal guard thy Genius grew;
O'er whoſe untimely grave thy Lyre has paid
Its juſt devotion to a Brother's ſhade:
And thus hereafter ſhall the Britiſh Muſe,
In Memory's fane the faireſt tablet chuſe,
To bid her ſons your blended names admire,
The pride of Friendſhip's as of Fancy's choir.
Thy modeſt GRAY, ſolicitous to pierce
The dark and diſtant ſource of modern Verſe,
By ſtrings untried firſt taught his Engliſh Lyre
To reach the Gothic Harp's terrific fire:

The North's wild ſpectres own his potent hand,
And Hell's nine portals at his voice expand ;
With new exiſtence by his Verſe endued,
See Gothic Fable wakes her ſhadowy brood,
Which, in the Runic rhymes of many a *Scald*,
With pleaſing dread our Northern ſires appall'd.

Ye brave Progenitors, ye vigorous Source
Of modern Freedom and of Europe's force,
While your rude minds, athirſt for martial ſtrife,
Mock'd all the meaner arts of poliſh'd life,
The Muſe ſtill led you by her magic clue,
And from your ſavage ſtrength new vigor drew.
In War's dire field your dauntleſs Bards appear'd,
Aloft their animating harps they rear'd,
Pour'd through the charging hoſt their potent ſtrain,
And ſwell'd the fiery flood in Valor's vein.

Souls thus inſpir'd, in every ſcene elate,
Defied the utmoſt rage of adverſe fate ;
In tort'ring death the Royal Captive ſang,
And ſmiles of triumph hid his mortal pang. *

* Ver. 36. See NOTE I.

Thus

Thus to brave Odin's Songs, our Northern ſire,
Rude, early framer of the modern Lyre,
Fierce Freedom gave an energy ſublime,
Parent and Guardian of the Gothic Rhyme.
  While nurtur'd in the North's protecting arms,
The modern Muſe diſplay'd her infant charms,
Like Jove's undaunted Child her ſpirit glow'd,
And force Herculean in her cradle ſhew'd;
Her native ſcene in roughneſs ſhe ſurpaſt,
Her breath tempeſtuous as the Northern blaſt:
But, when to ſofter climes the vagrant flew,
And baſk'd beneath a ſky of azure hue;
When for her throne the flowery South ſhe choſe,
And form'd her crown of the Provençal Roſe;
Warm'd by a brighter Sun's relaxing beams,
She tun'd her alter'd voice to tender themes:
Here her gay form a gaudier dreſs aſſumes,
And ſhines in Chivalry's imperial plumes;
Her votaries wear proud Honor's myſtic glove,
And every lyre reſounds Romantic Love;
Save when, to burſt Oppreſſion's mental chain,
Keen Satire mingles with this gallant train,

Strikes Prieſtly pride with Wit's vindictive flaſh,
And galls the ghoſtly Tyrant with her laſh. *
Afraid of Poeſy's expanſive flood,
Theſe early Bards along the ſhallows ſcud
In ſome light ſkiff; for on the depths untried
No full-trimm'd veſſel floats in Epic pride.
As infants, eager for regard, abound
In ſportive efforts of uncertain ſound,
Before their little artleſs lips can reach
The harder elements of perfect ſpeech;
So the young language of each modern clime
Roſe by preluſive lays to lofty rhyme.
Thro' many an age, while, in the Convent bred,
O'er the chill'd mind ſcholaſtic darkneſs ſpread,
Thoſe keener Spirits, who from Nature caught
The warmth that kindles to Poetic thought,
Betray'd, Ambition! by thy blind deſire,
Struck with ill-fated zeal the Latian lyre, †
Tho' Diſcord's hand the jarring ſtrings had croſt,
And all the ſweetneſs of their tone was loſt.

* Ver. 60. See NOTE II.

† Ver. 76. See NOTE III.

At length, fair Italy, luxuriant land,
Where Art's rich flowers in earlieſt bloom expand,
Thy daring DANTE his wild Viſion ſung, *
And rais'd to Epic pomp his native Tongue.
Down Arno's ſtream his new-form'd muſic floats,
The proud vale echoing with his Tuſcan notes.
See the bold Bard now ſink and now aſcend,
Wherever Thought can pierce or Life extend;
In his wide circuit from Hell's drear abyſs,
Thro' purifying ſcenes to realms of perfect bliſs,
He ſeems begirt with all that airy throng,
Who brighten or debaſe the Poet's ſong.
Sublimeſt Fancy now directs his march
To opening worlds, through that infernal arch
O'er whoſe rough ſummit aweful words are read,
That freeze each entering ſoul with hopeleſs dread.
Now at her bidding his ſtrong numbers flow,
And rend the heart at Ugolino's woe;
While Nature's glory-giving tear bedews
A tale unrivall'd by the Grecian Muſe.
Now to thoſe notes that milder grief inſpire,
Pathetic Tenderneſs attunes his lyre,

* Ver. 81. See NOTE IV.

Which, ſoft as murmurs of the plaintive dove,
Tells the ſad iſſue of illicit love.
But all the worſe companions of his way
Soon into different ſounds his ductile voice betray:
Satiric Fury now appears his guide,
Thro' thorny paths of Enmity and Pride;
Now quaint Conceit his wand'ring ſteps miſleads
Thro' all the hideous forms that Folly breeds;
Now Prieſtly Dullneſs the loſt Bard enſhrouds
In cold confuſion and ſcholaſtic clouds.
Unequal Spirit! in thy various ſtrain,
With all their influence Light and Darkneſs reign;
In thy ſtrange Verſe and wayward Theme alike
New forms of Beauty and Diſorder ſtrike;
Extremes of Harmony and Diſcord dwell,
The Seraph's muſic and the Demon's yell!
The patient Reader, to thy merit juſt,
With tranſport glows, and ſhudders with diſguſt.
Thy Failings ſprung from thy diſaſtrous time;
Thy ſtronger Beauties from a ſoul ſublime,
Whoſe vigor burſt, like the volcano's flame,
From central darkneſs to the ſphere of fame.

Of gentler mind, and with a heart to feel
The fondeſt warmth of emulative zeal,
Thy feſtive Scholar, who ador'd thy Lays,
And grac'd thy Genius with no ſcanty praiſe,
The gay BOCCACIO, tempts th' Italian Muſe *
More varied notes and different themes to chuſe;
Themes which her voice had dar'd not yet to ſound,
Valour's heroic feats by Beauty crown'd.
Sweet was the glowing Song; but, ſtrange to tell,
On his bold lyre Oblivion's ſhadows fell;
His richer Tales engroſs'd the World's regard,
And the bright Noveliſt eclips'd the Bard.
In following ages, when Italia's ſhore
Blaz'd with the riſing light of Claſſic lore,
Stern Syſtem led, from her new-founded ſchool,
A Poet faſhion'd by her rigid rule:
Behold my Son! (his ſapient Tut'reſs cried)
Who throws the bonds of Gothic rhyme aſide;
For whom theſe hands the Grecian Lyre new ſtrung:
She ſpoke exulting, and TRISSINO ſung. †

* Ver. 127. See NOTE V.

† Ver. 142. See NOTE VI.

In his cold Verſe he kept her Critic laws,
While Pedants own'd their pow'r, and yawn'd applauſe.
Indignant Fancy, who with ſcorn ſurvey'd
The ſleepy honors to proud Syſtem paid,
Smiling to ſee that on her rival's brow
The Poppy lurk'd beneath the Laurel bough,
Reſolv'd in ſportive triumph to diſplay
The rich extent of her ſuperior ſway:
From Necromancy's hand, in happieſt hour,
She caught the rod of viſionary power;
And as aloft the magic wand ſhe rais'd,
A peerleſs Bard with new effulgence blaz'd,
Born every law of Syſtem to diſown,
And rule by Fancy's boundleſs power alone.
High in mid air, between the Moon and Earth,
The Bard of Pathos now, and now of Mirth,
Pois'd with his lyre between a Griffin's wings,
Her ſportive darling, ARIOSTO, ſings.
As the light cloud, whoſe varying vapors fly,
Driven by the zephyr of the evening ſky,
Fixes and charms the never-wearied view,
By taking every ſhape and every hue;

So, by Variety's ſupreme controul,
His changeful numbers ſeize the willing ſoul.
Enchanted by his Song, Attention ſits,
With features catching every caſt by fits,
Like the fond infant, in whoſe tender brain
Young Senſibility delights to reign;
While rapid Joy and Pain each other chaſe
Thro' the ſoft muſcles of its April face.
In vain the ſlaves of Syſtem would diſcard
From Glory's claſſic train this airy Bard;
Delighted Nature her gay fav'rite crown'd,
And Envy's clamour in her plaudit drown'd.
Severe Morality, to cenſure mov'd,
His wanton Lyre with juſter blame reprov'd;
But his ſweet Song her anger ſo beguil'd,
That, ere ſhe finiſh'd her reproof, ſhe ſmil'd.

Of chaſter fire, a rival name ſucceeds,
Whoſe bold and glowing hand Religion leads:
In ſolemn accent, and in ſacred ſtate,
With claſſic lore and Chriſtian zeal elate,
Sweetly pathetic, and ſublimely ſtrong,
TASSO begins his more majeſtic ſong;

The Muſe of Sion, not implor'd in vain,
Guides to th' impaſſion'd ſoul his heavenly ſtrain.
Bluſh, BOILEAU, bluſh, and for that pride atone,
Which ſlander'd Genius far above thy own;
And thou, great injur'd Bard, thy ſtation claim
Amid the Demi-gods of Epic name;
Heir to a mantle by the Muſes ſpun,
Of a poetic Sire the more poetic Son.*
  Nor, tho' juſt Fame her richer palm devote
To the high-ſounding lyre of ſerious note,
Shall gay TASSONI want his feſtive crown,†
Who baniſh'd from the Muſe her aweful frown,
And, tuning to light themes her lofty ſtyle,
O'er her grave features ſpread a comic ſmile.
  Such various Sons, of Epic fire poſſeſt,
Italia foſter'd on her feeling breaſt.
  Spain, whoſe bold genius with misjudging pride
O'erſteps true glory by too large a ſtride,
Claims higher merit from one Poet's birth,
Who rivals all the different Bards of earth:

* Ver. 194. See NOTE VII.

† Ver. 197. See NOTE VIII.

With more than Niobe's parental boaſt,
She calls her ſingle Son himſelf an Hoſt,
And raſhly judges that her VEGA's lyre *
Is equal to the whole Aonian quire.
Impetuous Poet! whoſe full brain ſupplied
Such floods of Verſe, and in ſo quick a tide,
Their rapid ſwell, by its unrivall'd height,
Pleas'd, yet produc'd more wonder than delight:
Tho' thy free rhyme from Fancy's fountain guſh,
And with the grandeur of the torrent ruſh,
Its troubled ſtreams in dark diſorder roam,
With all the torrent's noiſe and all its foam.
To Emulation fir'd by TASSO's ſtrain,
Thy ſpirit quitted the dramatic plain
To ſeek thoſe Epic heights, ſublimely calm,
Whence he had pluck'd his Idumean palm;
But, vainly ſtruggling in a taſk too hard,
Sunk at the feet of that ſuperior Bard.
Brave Spaniard! ſtill thy wounded pride conſole;
Time ſhall not ſtrike thy name from Glory's roll,

* Ver. 209. See NOTE IX.

On

On which thy generous and fraternal hand
Emblaz'd each brother of thy tuneful band;
Thy Muſe ſhall ſhare the praiſe ſhe joy'd to give,
And while thy language laſts thy fame ſhall live.
Perchance, tho' ſtrange the paradox may ſeem,
That fame had riſen with a brighter beam,
Had radiant Fancy leſs enrich'd thy mind:
Her laviſh wealth, for wiſer uſe deſign'd,
Ruin'd the Poet by its ſplendid lure,
As India's mines have made his country poor.

With warmth more temperate, and in notes more clear,
That with Homeric richneſs fill the ear,
The brave Ercilla ſounds, with potent breath, *
His Epic trumpet in the fields of death.
In ſcenes of ſavage war when Spain unfurl'd
Her bloody banners o'er the weſtern world,
With all his Country's virtues in his frame,
Without the baſe alloy that ſtain'd her name,
In Danger's camp this military Bard,
Whom Cynthia ſaw on his nocturnal guard,

* Ver. 239. See NOTE X.

Recorded, in his bold descriptive lay,
The various fortune of the finish'd day;
Seizing the pen while Night's calm hours afford
A transient slumber to his satiate sword,
With noble justice his warm hand bestows
The meed of Honor on his valiant foes.
Howe'er precluded, by his generous aim,
From high pretensions to inventive fame,
His strongly-colour'd scenes of sanguine strife,
His softer pictures caught from Indian life,
Above the visionary forms of art,
Fire the awaken'd mind and melt the heart.

Tho' fiercest tribes her galling fetters drag,
Proud Spain must strike to Lusitania's flag,
Whose ampler folds, in conscious triumph spread,
Wave o'er her NAVAL POET's laureate head.
Ye Nymphs of Tagus, from your golden cell,
That caught the echo of his tuneful shell,
Rise, and to deck your darling's shrine provide
The richest treasures that the deep may hide:
From every land let grateful Commerce shower
Her tribute to the Bard who sung her power;

As thoſe rich gales, from whence his GAMA caught
A pleaſing earneſt of the prize he ſought,
The balmy fragrance of the Eaſt diſpenſe,
So ſteals his Song on the delighted ſenſe,
Aſtoniſhing, with ſweets unknown before,
Thoſe who ne'er taſted but of claſſic lore.
Immortal Bard, thy name with GAMA vies,
Thou, like thy Hero, with propitious ſkies
The ſail of bold adventure haſt unfurl'd,
And in the Epic ocean found a world.
'Twas thine to blend the Eagle and the Dove,
At once the Bard of Glory and of Love: *
Thy thankleſs Country heard thy varying lyre
To PETRARCH's Softneſs melt, and ſwell to HOMER's Fire!
Boaſt and lament, ungrateful land, a Name,
In life, in death, thy honor and thy ſhame.
Thou nobler realm, whom vanity betrays
To load thy letter'd ſons with laviſh praiſe;
Where Eulogy, with one eternal ſmile, †
Heaps her faint roſes in a withering pile:

* Ver. 280. See NOTE XI.
† Ver. 287. See NOTE XII.

A City milk-maid, on the firſt of May,
Who, pertly civil, and abſurdly gay;
Forms her dull garland in fantaſtic ſtate,
With ill-adjuſted flow'rs and borrow'd plate.
Canſt thou, ſelf-flattering France, with juſtice vaunt
One Epic laurel as thy native plant?
How oft a Gallic hand, with childiſh fire,
Has rattled Diſcord on th' heroic lyre,
While their dull aid aſſociate Critics bring,
And vainly teach the uſe of every ſtring!
In Morals, as, with many an empty boaſt,
They practiſe virtue leaſt who preach it moſt;
So, haughty Gallia, in thy Epic ſchool,
No great Examples riſe, but many a Rule.*
  Yet, tho' unjuſt to TASSO's nobler lays,
Keen BOILEAU ſhall not want his proper praiſe; †
He, archly waving his ſatiric rod
Thro' the new path which firſt TASSONI trod,
Purſued his ſportive march in happy hour,
And pluck'd from Satire's thorn a feſtive flower.

* Ver. 302. See NOTE XIII.

† Ver. 304. See NOTE XIV.

His ſacerdotal War ſhall wake delight,
And ſmiles in Gravity herſelf excite,
While Canons live to quarrel or to feaſt,
And gall can tinge the ſpirit of a Prieſt.
Nor, gentle GRESSET, ſhall thy ſprightly rhyme *
Ceaſe to enchant the liſt'ning ear of Time:
In thee the Graces all their powers inſtill,
To touch the Epic chords with playful ſkill.
The hapleſs Parrot whom thy lays endear,
In piety and woe the Trojan's peer;
His heart as tender, and his love more pure,
Shall, like Æneas, live of fame ſecure;
While female hands, with many a tender word,
Stroke the ſoft feathers of their fav'rite bird.
Yet not in childiſh ſport, or trifling joy,
Do Gallic Fair-ones all their hours employ:
See lovely BOCCAGE, in ambition ſtrong, †
Build, with aſpiring aim, her Epic Song!
By Glory fir'd, her roſy lips rehearſe
Thy feats, Columbus, in unborrow'd Verſe.

* Ver. 313. See NOTE XV.

† Ver. 325. See NOTE XVI.

If this new Muſe in War's dire field diſplays
No Grecian ſplendor, no Homeric blaze,
Attractive ſtill, tho' not in pomp array'd,
She charms like Zama, in her Verſe portray'd;
Whoſe form from dreſs no gorgeous pride aſſumes,
Clad in a ſimple zone of azure plumes.
England's dear gueſt! this Muſe of Gallia caught
From our inſpiring Iſle her ardent thought;
Here firſt ſhe ſtrove to reach, with vent'rous hope,
MILTON's chaſte grandeur, and the grace of POPE;
And ſweetly taught, in her mimetic ſtrain,
The Songs of Britain to the Banks of Seine.
But ſee! with wounded Pride's indignant glance,
The angry Genius of preſuming France
From ancient ſhrines their Epic wreaths would tear,
To ſwell the glory of her great VOLTAIRE. *
O, form'd in Learning's various paths to ſhine,
Encircled from thy birth by all the Nine,
On thee, bleſt Bard, theſe rivals ſeem'd to ſhower
Their various attributes and blended power!

* Ver. 344. See NOTE XVII.

 But,

But, when their lofty leader bade thee frame
The rich Heroic ſong on Henry's fame,
Sarcaſtic Humour, trifling with her lyre,
Took from th' inſpiring Muſe her ſolemn fire.
No more her ſpirit like the Eagle ſprings,
Or rides the buoyant air with balanc'd wings:
Tho' rapid ſtill, to narrow circuits bound,
She, like the darting Swallow, ſkims the ground.
Thy Verſe diſplays, beneath an Epic name,
Wit's flinty Spark, for Fancy's ſolar Flame.
While yet thy hand the Epic chords embrac'd,
With playful ſpirit, and with frolic haſte,
Such lively ſounds thy rapid fingers drew,
And thro' the feſtive notes ſo lightly flew,
Nature and Fancy join'd their charms to ſwell,
And laughing Humour crown'd thy new Pucelle:
But the chaſte Muſes, ſtartled at the ſound,
Amid thy ſprightly numbers bluſh'd and frown'd;
With decent anger, and becoming pride,
Severer Virtue threw the Song aſide;
While Juſtice own'd it, with a kinder glance,
The wittieſt Levity of wanton France.

Now, graver Britain, amiably ſevere,
To thee, with native zeal, to thee I ſteer;
My vent'rous bark, its foreign circuit o'er,
Exulting ſprings to thy parental ſhore.

Thou gorgeous Queen, who on thy ſilvery coaſt,
Sitteſt encircled by a filial hoſt,
And ſeeſt thy ſons, the jewels of thy crown,
Blaze with each varying ray of rich renown;
If with juſt love I hold their Genius dear,
Lament their hardſhips, and their fame revere,
O bid thy Epic Muſe, with honor due,
Range her departed Champions in my view!

See, on a party-colour'd ſteed of fire,
With Humour at his ſide, his truſty Squire,
Gay Chaucer leads—in form a Knight of old,
And his ſtrong armour is of ſteel and gold;
But o'er it age a cruel ruſt has ſpread,
And made the brilliant metals dark as lead.

Now gentle Spenser, Fancy's fav'rite Bard,
Awakes my wonder and my fond regard;
Encircling Fairies bear, in ſportive dance,
His adamantine ſhield and magic lance;

While Allegory, dreſt with myſtic art,
Appears his Guide; but, promiſing to dart
A lambent glory round her liſt'ning Son,
She hides him in the web herſelf has ſpun.
Ingenuous COWLEY, the fond dupe of Wit,
Seems like a vapour o'er the field to flit;
In David's praiſe he ſtrikes ſome Epic notes,
But ſoon down Lethe's ſtream their dying murmur floats.
While COWLEY vaniſh'd in an amorous riddle,
Up roſe the frolic Bard of Bear and Fiddle:
His ſmile exhilarates the ſullen earth,
Adorning Satire in the maſk of Mirth:
Taught by his Song, Fanatics ceaſe their jars,
And wiſe Aſtrologers renounce the Stars.
Unrivall'd BUTLER! bleſt with happy ſkill
To heal by comic verſe each ſerious ill,
By Wit's ſtrong flaſhes Reaſon's light diſpenſe,
And laugh a frantic nation into ſenſe!
Apart, and on a ſacred hill retir'd,
Beyond all mortal inſpiration fir'd,
The mighty MILTON ſits—an hoſt around
Of liſt'ning Angels guard the holy ground;

Amaz'd they ſee a human form aſpire
To graſp with daring hand a Seraph's lyre,
Inly irradiate with celeſtial beams,
Attempt thoſe high, thoſe ſoul-ſubduing themes,
(Which humbler Denizens of Heaven decline)
And celebrate, with ſanctity divine,
The ſtarry field from warring Angels won,
And God triumphant in his Victor Son.
Nor leſs the wonder, and the ſweet delight,
His milder ſcenes and ſofter notes excite,
When at his bidding Eden's blooming grove
Breathes the rich ſweets of Innocence and Love.
With ſuch pure joy as our Forefather knew
When Raphael, heavenly gueſt, firſt met his view,
And our glad Sire, within his bliſsful bower,
Drank the pure converſe of th' ætherial Power,
Round the bleſt Bard his raptur'd audience throng,
And feel their ſouls imparadis'd in ſong.

Of humbler mien, but not of mortal race,
Ill-fated Dryden, with Imperial grace,
Gives to th' obedient lyre his rapid laws;
Tones yet unheard, with touch divine, he draws,

The melting fall, the riſing ſwell ſublime,
And all the magic of melodious rhyme.
See with proud joy Imagination ſpread
A wreath of honor round his aged head!
But two baſe Spectres, tho' of different hue,
The Bard unhappy in his march purſue;
Two vile diſgraceful Fiends, of race accurſt,
Conceiv'd by Spleen, by meagre Famine nurſt,
Malignant Satire, mercenary Praiſe,
Shed their dark ſpots on his immortal bays.
  Poor DAVENANT march'd before, with nobler aim,
His keen eye fixt upon the palm of Fame,
But cruel Fortune doom'd him to rehearſe
A Theme ill-choſen, in ill-choſen Verſe.
  Next came Sir RICHARD, but in woeful plight,
DRYDEN's Led-horſe firſt threw the luckleſs Knight.
He roſe advent'rous ſtill—O who may count
How oft he tried a different Steed to mount!
Each angry ſteed his awkward rider flung;
Undaunted ſtill he fell, and falling ſung.
  But Æſculapius, who, with grief diſtreſt,
Beheld his offspring made a public jeſt,

Soon bade a livelier Son with mirth efface
The ſhame he ſuffer'd from Sir RICHARD's caſe.
Swift at the word his ſprightly GARTH began
To make an * helmet of a Cloſe-ſtool Pan;
An Urinal he for his trumpet takes,
And at each blaſt he blows ſee Laughter ſhakes.
    Yet peace—new muſic floats on Æther's wings;
Say, is it Harmony herſelf who ſings?
No! while enraptur'd Sylphs the Song inſpire,
'Tis POPE who ſweetly wakes the ſilver lyre
To melting notes, more muſically clear
Than Ariel whiſper'd in Belinda's ear.
Too ſoon he quits them for a ſharper tone;
See him, tho' form'd to fill the Epic throne,
Decline the ſceptre of that wide domain,
To bear a Lictor's rod in Satire's train;
And, ſhrouded in a miſt of moral ſpleen, †
Behold him cloſe the viſionary ſcene!

* And his high helmet was a Cloſe-ſtool Pan. DISPENSARY.

† Ver. 475. See NOTE XVIII.

END OF THE THIRD EPISTLE.

EPISTLE

THE FOURTH.

ARGUMENT

OF THE FOURTH EPISTLE.

Remarks on the supposed Parsimony of Nature in bestowing Poetic Genius.—The Evils and the Advantages of Poetry exemplified in the Fate of different Poets.

EPISTLE IV.

SAY, generous Power, benignant Nature, ſay,
Who temp'reſt with thy touch our human clay,
Warming the fields of Thought with genial care,
The various fruits of mental growth to bear;
Shall not thy vot'ries glow with juſt diſdain,
When Sloth or Spleen thy bounteous hand arraign?
Art thou the Niggard they pretend thou art,
A grudging Parent with a Stepdame's heart;
And doſt thou ſhed, with rare, reluctant toil,
Bright Fancy's germins in the mental ſoil?
Is Genius, thy ſweet Plant of richeſt power,
Whoſe dearly priz'd and long-expected flower
More tardy than the Aloe's bloom appears,
Ordain'd to blow but in a thouſand years?
Periſh the ſickly thought—let thoſe who hold
Thy quick'ning influence ſo coy, ſo cold,

Calmly the habitable earth ſurvey,
From time's firſt æra to the paſſing day;
In what rude clime, beneath what angry ſkies,
Have plants Poetic never dar'd to riſe?
In torrid regions, where 'tis toil to think,
Where ſouls in ſtupid eaſe ſupinely ſink;
And where the native of the deſert drear
Yields to blank darkneſs half his icy year;
In theſe unfriendly ſcenes, where each extreme
Of heat and cold forbids the mind to teem,
Poetic bloſſoms into Being ſtart,
Spontaneous produce of the feeling heart.
  Can we then deem that in thoſe happier lands,
Where every vital energy expands;
Where Thought, the golden harveſt of the mind,
Springs into rich luxuriance, unconfin'd;
That in ſuch ſoils, with mental weeds o'ergrown,
The Seeds of Poeſy were thinly ſown?
  Shall we deny the labor of the ſwain,
Who to the cultur'd earth confides the grain,
If all the vagrant harpies of the air
From its new bed the pregnant treaſure tear;

If, when ſcarce riſing, with a ſtem infirm,
It dies the victim of the mining worm;
If mildew, riding in the eaſtern guſt,
Turns all its ripening gold to ſable duſt?
These foes combin'd (and with them who may cope?)
Are not more hoſtile to the Farmer's hope,
Than Life's keen paſſions to that lighter grain
Of Fancy, ſcatter'd o'er the infant brain.
Pleaſure, the rambling Bird! the painted Jay!
May ſnatch the richeſt ſeeds of Verſe away;
Or Indolence, the worm that winds with art
Thro' the cloſe texture of the cleaneſt heart,
May, if they haply have begun to ſhoot,
With partial miſchief wound the ſick'ning root;
Or Avarice, the mildew of the ſoul,
May ſweep the mental field and blight the whole;
Nay, the meek errors of the modeſt mind,
To its own vigor diffidently blind,
And that cold ſpleen, which falſely has declar'd
The powers of Nature and of Art impair'd,
The gate that Genius has unclos'd may guard,
And rivet to the earth the riſing Bard:

For who will quit, tho' from mean aims exempt,
The cares that ſummon, and the joys that tempt,
In many a lonely ſtudious hour to try
Where latent ſprings of Poeſy may lie;
Who will from ſocial eaſe his mind divorce,
To prove in Art's wide field its ſecret force,
If, blind to Nature's frank parental love,
He deems that Verſe, deſcended from above,
Like Heaven's more ſacred ſigns, whoſe time is o'er,
A gift miraculous, conferr'd no more?
O Prejudice! thou bane of Arts, thou peſt,
Whoſe ruffian powers the free-born ſoul arreſt;
Thou who, dethroning Reaſon, dar'ſt to frame
And iſſue thy proud laws beneath her name;
Thou Coaſter on the intellectual deep,
Ordering each timid bark thy courſe to keep;
Who, leſt ſome daring mind beyond thee ſteer,
Haſt rais'd, to vouch thy vanity and fear,
Herculean pillars where thy ſail was furl'd,
And nam'd thy bounds the Limits of the World.
Thou braggart, Prejudice, how oft thy breath
Has doom'd young Genius to the ſhades of death!

How often has thy voice, with brutal fire
Forbidding Female hands to touch the lyre,
Deny'd to Woman, Nature's fav'rite child,
The right to enter Fancy's opening wild!
Bleſt be this ſmiling hour, when Britain ſees
Her Fair-ones cancel ſuch abſurd decrees,
In one harmonious group, with graceful ſcorn,
Spring o'er the Pedant's fence of wither'd thorn,
And reach Parnaſſian heights, where, laurel-crown'd,
This ſofter Quire the notes of triumph ſound;
Where SEWARD, leader of the lovely train,
Pours o'er heroic tombs her potent ſtrain;
Potent to ſooth the honor'd dead, and dart
Congenial virtue thro' each panting heart;
Potent thro' ſpirits maſculine to ſpread
Poetic jealouſy and envious dread;
If Love and Envy could in union reſt,
And rule with blended ſway a Poet's breaſt;
The Bards of Britain, with unjaundic'd eyes,
Will glory to behold ſuch rivals riſe.
Proceed, ye Siſters of the tuneful Shell, *
Without a ſcruple, in that Art excel,

* Ver. 103. See NOTE I.

Which

Which reigns, by virtuous Pleaſure's ſoft controul,
In ſweet accordance with the Female ſoul;
Pure as yourſelves, and like your charms deſign'd
To bleſs the earth, and humanize mankind.
   Where'er that Parent of engaging thought,
Warm Senſibility, like light, has taught
The bright'ning mirror of the mind to ſhew
Nature's reflected forms in all their glow;
Where in full tides the fine affections roll,
And the warm heart invigorates the ſoul;
In that rich ſpot, where winds propitious blow,
Culture may teach poetic Fame to grow.
Refin'd Invention and harmonious Rhyme,
Are the ſlow gifts of Study and of Time;
But to the Bard whom all the Muſes court,
His Sports are ſtudy, and his Studies ſport.
E'en at this period, when all tongues declare
Poetic talents are a gift moſt rare,
Unnumber'd Spirits, in our generous iſle,
Are ripening now beneath kind Nature's ſmile,
Whom happy care might lead to laſting fame,
And art ennoble with a Poet's name.

Not

Not that 'tis granted this high prize to gain
By light effuſions of a ſportive vein,
The idle Ballad of a ſummer's morn,
The child of Frolic, in a moment born:
Who views ſuch trifles with a vain regard,
But ill deſerves the mighty name of Bard;
In diff'rent tints ſee virtuous GRESSET trace
The genuine ſpirit of Poetic race:

* Let the true Bard (this pleaſing Poet ſings)
Bid his fair fame on ſtrong foundations reſt;
His be each honour that from Genius ſprings,
Eſteem'd by Judgment, and by Love careſt;

His the Ambition, that in climes unknown,
Where'er his wand'ring volume may extend,
Where'er that Picture of his mind is ſhewn,
In every Reader he may find a Friend.

" Be

* Je veux qu'épris d'un nom plus légitime,
Que non content de ſe voir eſtimé,
Par ſon Genie un Amant de la rime
Emporte encor le plaiſir d'etre aimé;

Qu'aux régions à lui meme inconnues
Ou voleront ſes gracieux ecrits,
A ce tableau de ſes mœurs ingénues,
Tous ſes Lecteurs deviennent ſes Amis:

Que

Be it his aim to dart the living ray
Of pureſt pleaſure o'er th' enlighten'd earth ;
And in ſweet union let his works diſplay
The Poet's fancy and the Patriot's worth.

Thus far, O Gresset, on theſe points agreed,
My ſoul profeſſes thy Poetic Creed ;
Tho' the ſoft languor of thy ſong I blame,
Which preſent eaſe prefers to future fame,
Thy nobler maxims I with pride embrace,
That Verſe ſhou'd ever riſe on Virtue's baſe,
And every maſter of this matchleſs art
Exalt the Spirit, and improve the Heart ;
And many a Youth, now riſing into Man,
Might build his glory on this noble plan,
With latent powers to make the ſtructure laſt
Till Nature dies, and Time itſelf be paſt :
But O, how intricate the chances lurk,
Whoſe power may drive him from the doubtful work !
Of the ſtrong minds by chaſte Ambition nurſt,
Who burn to rank in Honor's line the firſt,

Que diſſipant le préjugé vulgaire,
Il montre enfin que ſans crime on peut plaire,
Et reunir, par un heureux lien,
L'Auteur charmant et le vrai Citoyen.

One leaves the Lyre to ſeize the martial crown,
And one may drop it at a Parent's frown;
For ſtill with ſcorn, which anxious fear inflames,
Parental care 'gainſt Poeſy declaims!
"Fly, fly, my ſon, (the fond adviſer cries)
"That thorny path, where every peril lies;
"Oh! be not thou by that vain Art betray'd,
"Whoſe pains are Subſtance, and whoſe joys are Shade!
"Mark, in the Muſes' miſerable throng,
"What air-built viſions cheat the Sons of Song!
"This is a leſſon taught in every ſtreet,
"And Bards may read it at each Stall they meet:
"Take the firſt book, behold in many a page
"What promiſes of life from age to age;
"The Poet ſwears himſelf he ne'er ſhall die,
"A troop of rhyming friends ſupport the lie:
"Yet ſee how ſoon in Lethe's ſtream expire
"This leading Bard and his attendant Quire,
"And round theſe boards, their unexpected bier,
"Their ghoſts breathe wiſdom in the paſſing ear:
"For Stalls, like Church-yards, moral truth ſupply,
"And teach the viſionary Bard to die.

" If preſent fame, thy airy hope, be gain'd,
" By vigils purchas'd, and by toil maintain'd,
" What baſe alloy muſt ſink the doubtful prize,
" Which Envy poiſons, and which Spleen denies!
" Obſerve what ills the living Bard attend,
" Neglect his lot, and Penury his end!
" Behold the world unequally requite.
" Two Arts that miniſter to chaſte delight,
" Twin-ſiſters, who with kindred beauty ſtrike
" In fortune different, as in charms alike:
" PAINTING, fair Danae! has her Golden ſhower,
" But Want is POESY's proverbial dower.
" See, while with brilliant genius, ill applied,
" The noble RUBENS flatters Royal pride,
" Makes all the Virtues, who abjur'd him, wait
" On abject JAMES, in allegoric ſtate;
" O'er the baſe Pedant his rich radiance flings,
" And deifies the meaneſt of our Kings;
" His Son rewards, and Honor owns the deed,
" The ſplendid Artiſt with a princely meed.
" Now turn to MILTON's latter days, and ſee
" How Bards and Painters in their fate agree;

" Behold him fell his heaven-illumin'd page,
" Mirac'lous child of his deserted age,
" For such a pittance, so ignobly slight,
" As wounded Learning blushes to recite! *
" If changing times suggest the pleasing hope,
" That Bards no more with adverse fortune cope;
" That in this alter'd clime, where Arts increase,
" And make our polish'd Isle a second Greece;
" That now, if Poesy proclaims her Son,
" And challenges the wreath by Fancy won;
" Both Fame and Wealth adopt him as their heir,
" And liberal Grandeur makes his life her care;
" From such vain thoughts thy erring mind defend,
" And look on CHATTERTON's disastrous end.
" Oh, ill-starr'd Youth, whom Nature form'd, in vain,
" With powers on Pindus' splendid height to reign!
" O dread example of what pangs await
" Young Genius struggling with malignant fate!
" What could the Muse, who fir'd thy infant frame
" With the rich promise of Poetic fame;

* Ver. 210. See NOTE II.

" Who taught thy hand its magic art to hide,
" And mock the infolence of Critic pride ;
" What cou'd her unavailing cares oppofe,
" To fave her darling from his defperate foes ;
" From preffing Want's calamitous controul,
" And Pride, the fever of the ardent foul ?
" Ah, fee, too confcious of her failing power,
" She quits her Nurfling in his deathful hour !
" In a chill room, within whofe wretched wall
" No cheering voice replies to Mifery's call ;
" Near a vile bed, too crazy to fuftain
" Misfortune's wafted limbs, convuls'd with pain,
" On the bare floor, with heaven-directed eyes,
" The haplefs Youth in fpeechlefs horror lies !
" The pois'nous vial, by diftraction drain'd,
" Rolls from his hand, in wild contortion ftrain'd :
" Pale with life-wafting pangs, it's dire effect,
" And ftung to madnefs by the world's neglect,
" He, in abhorrence of the dangerous Art,
" Once the dear idol of his glowing heart,
" Tears from his Harp the vain detefted wires,
" And in the frenzy of Defpair expires !

" Pernicious Poesy! thy baleful sway
" Exalts to weaken, flatters to betray;
" When thy fond Votary has to thee resign'd
" The captive powers of his deluded mind,
" Fantastic hopes his swelling breast inflame,
" Tempestous passions tear his shatter'd frame,
" Which sinks; for round it seas of trouble roar,
" Admitting agony at every pore;
" While Dullness, whom no tender feelings check,
" Grins at his ruin, and enjoys the wreck;
" Seen thro' the mist which clouds her heavy eyes,
" The faults of Genius swell to double size,
" His generous faults, which her base pride makes known,
" Insulting errors so unlike her own.
" Far then, my Son, far from this Syren steer;
" Or, if her dulcet song must charm thy ear,
" Let Reason bind thee, like the Greek of yore,
" To catch her music, but escape her shore;
" For never shall the wretch her power can seize,
" Regain the port of Fortune, or of Ease."
Parental Fear thus warns the filial heart,
From this alluring, this insidious Art;

But, wounded thus, by keen Invective's edge,
Say, can the Muſe no juſt defence alledge?
In ſtriking contraſt has ſhe not to paint
Her proſp'rous Hero, as her murder'd Saint?
'Tis true, ſhe oft has fruitleſs vigils kept,
And oft, with unavailing ſorrow, wept
Her injur'd Vot'ries, doom'd to quit the earth
In the ſharp pangs of ill-requited worth.
Ye noble Martyrs of poetic name,
" Bliſs to your Spirits, to your Mem'ries Fame!"
By gen'rous Honor be your toils rever'd,
To grateful Nature be your names endear'd!
To all who Pity's feeling nerve poſſeſs,
Doubly endear'd by undeſerv'd diſtreſs.

But, to relieve the pain your wrongs awake,
O let the Muſe her brighter records take,
Review the crown by living Merit won,
And ſhare the triumph of each happier Son.

If the young Bard who ſtarts for Glory's goal,
Can ſate with preſent fame his ardent ſoul,
Poetic ſtory can with truth atteſt
This rareſt, richeſt prize in life poſſeſt.

See the GAY POET of Italia's ſhore,
Whom with fond zeal her feeling ſons adore,
Paſs, while his heart with exultation beats,
Poetic Mantua's applauding ſtreets!
See him, while Juſtice ſmiles, and Envy ſnarls,
Receive the Laurel from Imperial Charles! *
And lo, th' unfading Gift ſtill ſhines above
Each periſhable mark of Royal Love.
  If humbler views the tuneful mind inflame,
If to be rich can be a Poet's aim,
The Muſe may ſhew, but in a different clime,
Wealth, the fair produce of applauded Rhyme.
Behold the fav'rite Bard of lib'ral Spain,
Her wond'rous VEGA, of exhauſtleſs vein;
From honeſt Poverty, his early lot,
With honor ſullied by no vicious blot,
Behold him riſe on Fortune's glittering wings,
And almoſt reach the opulence of Kings;
The high-ſoul'd Nobles of his native land,
Enrich their Poet with ſo frank a hand!

* Ver. 298. See NOTE III.

For him Pieria's rock with treaſure teems,
For him her fountains guſh with golden ſtreams; *
And ne'er did Fortune, with a love more juſt,
Her ſplendid ſtores to worthier hands entruſt;
For with the pureſt current, wide and ſtrong,
His Charity ſurpaſt his copious Song.
  If the Enthuſiaſt higher hope purſues,
If from his commerce with th' inſpiring Muſe
He ſeeks to gain, by no mean aims confin'd,
Freedom of thought and energy of mind;
To raiſe his ſpirit, with ætherial fire,
Above each little want and low deſire;
O turn where MILTON flames with Epic rage,
Unhurt by poverty, unchill'd by age:
Tho' danger threaten his declining day,
Tho' clouds of darkneſs quench his viſual ray,
The heavenly Muſe his hallow'd ſpirit fills
With raptures that ſurmount his matchleſs ills;
From earth ſhe bears him to bright Fancy's goal,
And diſtant fame illuminates his ſoul!
  Too oft the wealthy, to proud follies born,
Have turn'd from letter'd Poverty with ſcorn.

* Ver. 314. See NOTE IV.

Dull Opulence! thy narrow joys enlarge;
To shield weak Merit is thy noblest charge:
Search the dark scenes where drooping Genius lies,
And keep from sorriest sights a nation's eyes,
That, from expiring Want's reproaches free,
Our generous country may ne'er weep to see
A future CHATTERTON by poison dead,
An OTWAY fainting for a little bread.

If deaths like these deform'd our native isle,
Some English Bards have bask'd in Fortune's smile.
Alike in Station and in Genius blest,
By Knowledge prais'd, by Dignity carest,
POPE's happy Freedom, all base wants above,
Flow'd from the golden stream of Public Love;
That richest antidote the Bard can seize,
To save his spirit from its worst disease,
From mean Dependance, bright Ambition's bane,
Which blushing Fancy strives to hide in vain.
To POPE the titled Patron joy'd to bend,
Still more ennobled when proclaim'd his friend;
For him the hands of jarring Faction join
To keep their tribute on his HOMER's shrine.

Proud of the frank reward his talents find,
And nobly conscious of no venal mind,
With the just world his fair account he clears,
And owns no debt to Princes or to Peers.

Yet, while our nation feels new thirst arise
For that pure joy which Poesy supplies,
Bards, whom the tempting Muse enlists by stealth,
Perceive their path is not the road to wealth,
To honorable wealth, young Labor's spoil,
The due reward of no inglorious toil;
Whose well-earn'd comforts noblest minds engage,
The just asylum of declining age;
Else had we seen a warm Poetic Youth
Change Fiction's roses for the thorns of Truth,
From Fancy's realm, his native field, withdraw,
To pay hard homage to severer Law.

O thou bright Spirit, whom the Asian Muse
Had fondly steep'd in all her fragrant dews,
And o'er whose early Song, that mental feast,
She breath'd the sweetness of the rifled East;
Since independant Honor's high controul
Detach'd from Poesy thy ardent soul,

To ſeek with better hopes Perſuaſion's ſeat,
Bleſt be thoſe hopes, and happy that retreat!
Which with regret all Britiſh Bards muſt ſee,
And mourn a Brother loſt in loſing thee.
Nor leads the Poet's path to that throng'd gate
Where crouching Prieſts on proud Preferment wait;
Where, while in vain a thouſand vot'ries fawn,
She robes her fav'rite few in hallow'd Lawn:
Elſe, liberal Mason, had thy ſpotleſs name,
The Ward of Virtue as the Heir of Fame,
In liſts of mitred Lords been ſtill unread,
While Mitres drop on many a Critic's head?
Peace to all ſuch, whoſe decent brows may bear
Thoſe ſacred honors plac'd by Learning there;
May juſt reſpect from brutal inſult guard
Their Crown, unenvied by the genuine Bard!
Let Poeſy, embelliſh'd by thy care,
Pathetic Mason! with juſt pride declare,
Thy breaſt muſt feel a more exulting fire,
Than Pomp can give, or Dignity inſpire,
When Nature tells thee that thy Verſe imparts
The thrill of pleaſure to ten thouſand hearts;

And often has ſhe heard ingenuous Youth,
Accompliſh'd Beauty, and unbiaſs'd Truth,
Thoſe faithful harbingers of future fame,
With tender intereſt pronounce thy name
With lively gratitude for joy refin'd,
Gift of thy Genius to the feeling mind.
Theſe are the honors which the Muſe confers,
The radiant Crown of living light is her's;
And on thy brow ſhe gave thoſe gems to blaze,
That far outſhine the Mitre's tranſient rays;
Gems that ſhall mock malignant Envy's breath,
And ſhine ſtill brighter thro' the ſhades of death.
For me, who feel, whene'er I touch the lyre,
My talents ſink below my proud deſire;
Who often doubt, and ſometimes credit give,
When Friends aſſure me that my Verſe will live;
Whom health too tender for the buſtling throng
Led into penſive ſhade and ſoothing ſong;
Whatever fortune my unpoliſh'd rhymes
May meet, in preſent or in future times,
Let the bleſt Art my grateful thoughts employ,
Which ſooths my ſorrow and augments my joy;

Whence lonely Peace and ſocial Pleaſure ſprings,
And Friendſhip, dearer than the ſmile of Kings!
While keener Poets, querulouſly proud,
Lament the Ills of Poeſy aloud,
And magnify, with Irritation's zeal,
Thoſe common evils we too ſtrongly feel,
The envious Comment and the ſubtle Style
Of ſpecious Slander, ſtabbing with a ſmile;
Frankly I wiſh to make her Bleſſings known,
And think thoſe Bleſſings for her Ills atone:
Nor wou'd my honeſt pride that praiſe forego,
Which makes Malignity yet more my foe.
If heart-felt pain e'er led me to accuſe
The dangerous gift of the alluring Muſe,
'Twas in the moment when my Verſe impreſt
Some anxious feelings on a Mother's breaſt.
O thou fond Spirit, who with pride haſt ſmil'd,
And frown'd with fear, on thy poetic child,
Pleas'd, yet alarm'd, when in his boyiſh time
He ſigh'd in numbers, or he laugh'd in rhyme;
While thy kind cautions warn'd him to beware
Of Penury, the Bard's perpetual ſnare;

Marking the early temper of his ſoul,
Careleſs of wealth, nor fit for baſe controul:
Thou tender Saint, to whom he owes much more
Than ever Child to Parent ow'd before,
In life's firſt ſeaſon, when the fever's flame
Shrunk to deformity his ſhrivell'd frame,
And turn'd each fairer image in his brain
To blank confuſion and her crazy train,
'Twas thine, with conſtant love, thro' ling'ring years,
To bathe thy Idiot Orphan in thy tears;
Day after day, and night ſucceeding night,
To turn inceſſant to the hideous ſight,
And frequent watch, if haply at thy view
Departed Reaſon might not dawn anew.
Tho' medicinal art, with pitying care,
Cou'd lend no aid to ſave thee from deſpair,
Thy fond maternal heart adher'd to Hope and Prayer:
Nor pray'd in vain; thy child from Pow'rs above
Receiv'd the ſenſe to feel and bleſs thy love;
O might he thence receive the happy ſkill,
And force proportion'd to his ardent will,
With Truth's unfading radiance to emblaze
Thy virtues, worthy of immortal praiſe!

Nature,

Nature, who deck'd thy form with Beauty's flowers,
Exhausted on thy soul her finer powers;
Taught it with all her energy to feel
Love's melting softness, Friendship's fervid zeal,
The generous purpose, and the active thought,
With Charity's diffusive spirit fraught;
There all the best of mental gifts she plac'd,
Vigor of Judgment, purity of Taste,
Superior parts, without their spleenful leaven,
Kindness to Earth, and confidence in Heaven.
While my fond thoughts o'er all thy merits roll,
Thy praise thus gushes from my filial soul;
Nor will the Public with harsh rigor blame
This my just homage to thy honor'd name;
To please that Public, if to please be mine,
Thy Virtues train'd me—let the praise be thine.
Since thou hast reach'd that world where Love alone,
Where Love Parental can exceed thy own;
If in celestial realms the blest may know
And aid the objects of their care below,
While in this sublunary scene of strife
Thy Son possesses frail and feverish life,

If Heaven allot him many an added hour,
Gild it with virtuous thought and mental power,
Power to exalt, with every aim refin'd,
The lovelieſt of the Arts that bleſs mankind!

END OF THE FOURTH EPISTLE.

EPISTLE

THE FIFTH.

ARGUMENT

OF THE FIFTH EPISTLE.

Examination of the received opinion, that supernatural Agency is essential to the Epic Poem.—The folly and injustice of all arbitrary systems in Poetry.—The Epic province not yet exhausted.—Subjects from English History the most interesting.—A national Epic Poem the great desideratum in English literature.—The Author's wish of seeing it supplied by the genius of Mr. MASON.

EPISTLE V.

ILL-FATED Poesy! as human worth,
Prais'd, yet unaided, often sinks to earth;
So sink thy powers; not doom'd alone to know
Scorn, or neglect, from an unfeeling Foe,
But destin'd more oppressive wrong to feel
From the misguided Friend's perplexing zeal.
Such Friends are those, who in their proud display
Of thy young beauty, and thy early sway,
Pretend thou'rt robb'd of all thy warmth sublime,
By the benumbing touch of modern Time.
What! is the Epic Muse, that lofty Fair,
Who makes the discipline of Earth her care!
That mighty Minister, whom Virtue leads
To train the noblest minds to noblest deeds!
Is she, in office great, in glory rich,
Degraded to a poor, pretended Witch,

Who rais'd her ſpells, and all her magic power,
But on the folly of the favoring hour?
Whoſe dark, deſpis'd illuſions melt away
At the clear dawn of Philoſophic day?
To ſuch they ſink her, who lament her fall
From the high Synod of th' Olympian Hall;
Who worſhip Syſtem, hid in Fancy's veil,
And think that all her Epic force muſt fail,
If ſhe no more can borrow or create
Celeſtial Agents to uphold her ſtate.
To prove if this fam'd doctrine may be found
To reſt on ſolid, or on ſandy ground,
Let Critic Reaſon all her light diffuſe
O'er the wide empire of this injur'd Muſe,
To guide our ſearch to every varied ſource
And ſeparate ſinew of her vital force.—
To three prime powers within the human frame,
With equal energy ſhe points her aim:
By pure exalted Sentiment ſhe draws
From Judgment's ſteady voice no light applauſe;
By Nature's ſimple and pathetic ſtrains,
The willing homage of the Heart ſhe gains;

The precious tribute ſhe receives from theſe,
Shines undebas'd by changing Time's decrees;
The noble thought, that fir'd a Grecian ſoul,
Keeps o'er a Britiſh mind its firm controul;
The ſcenes, where Nature ſeems herſelf to ſpeak,
Still touch a Briton, as they touch'd a Greek:
To captivate admiring Fancy's eyes,
She bids celeſtial decorations riſe;
But, as a playful and capricious child
Frowns at the ſplendid toy on which it ſmil'd;
So wayward Fancy now with ſcorn ſurveys
Thoſe ſpecious Miracles ſhe lov'd to praiſe;
Still fond of change, and fickle Faſhion's dupe,
Now keen to ſoar, and eager now to ſtoop,
Her Gods, Dev'ls, Saints, Magicians, riſe and fall,
And now ſhe worſhips each, now laughs at all.

If then within the rich and wide domain
O'er which the Epic Muſe delights to reign,
One province weaker than the reſt be found,
'Tis her Celeſtial Sphere, or Fairy Ground:
Her realm of Marvels is the diſtant land,
O'er which ſhe holds a perilous command;

For, plac'd beyond the reach of Nature's aid,
Here her worſt foes her tottering force invade:
O'er the wide precinct proud Opinion towers,
And withers with a look its alter'd powers;
While laviſh Ridicule, pert Child of Taſte!
Turns the rich confine to ſo poor a waſte,
That ſome, who deem it but a cumbrous weight,
Would lop this Province from its Parent State.
  What mighty voice firſt ſpoke this wond'rous law,
Which ductile Critics ſtill repeat with awe—
That man's unkindling ſpirit muſt refuſe
A generous plaudit to th' Heroic Muſe,
Howe'er ſhe paint her ſcenes of manly life,
If no ſuperior Agents aid the ſtrife?
  In days of courtly wit, and wanton mirth,
The looſe PETRONIUS gave the maxim birth; *
Perchance, to ſooth the envious Nero's ear,
And ſink the Bard whoſe fame he ſigh'd to hear;
To injure LUCAN, whoſe advent'rous mind,
Inflam'd by Freedom, with juſt ſcorn reſign'd

* Ver. 76. See NOTE I.

Th' exhausted fables of the starry pole,
And found a nobler theme in CATO's soul:
To wound him, in the mask of Critic art,
The subtle Courtier launch'd this venom'd dart,
And following Critics, fond of Classic lore,
Still echo the vain law from shore to shore;
On Poets still for Deities they call,
And deem mere earthly Bards no Bards at all.
Yet, if by fits the mighty HOMER nods,
Where sinks he more than with his sleepy Gods?
E'en LUCAN proves, by his immortal name,
How weak the dagger levell'd at his fame;
For in his Song, which Time will ne'er forget,
If Taste, who much may praise, will much regret,
'Tis not the absence of th' Olympian state,
Embroil'd by jarring Gods in coarse debate:
'Tis nice arrangement, Nature's easy air,
In scenes unfolded with superior care;
'Tis softer diction, elegantly terse,
And the fine polish of Virgilian Verse.
O blind to Nature! who assert the Muse
Must o'er the human frame her empire lose,

Failing to fly, in Fancy's wild career,
Above this viſible diurnal ſphere!
Behold yon penſive Fair! who turns with grief
The tender Novel's ſoul-poſſeſſing leaf!
Why with moiſt eyes to thoſe ſoft pages glu'd,
Forgetting her fix'd hours of ſleep and food;
Why does ſhe keenly graſp its precious woes,
Nor quit the volume till the ſtory cloſe?
'Tis not that Fancy plays her revels there,
Cheating the mind with lucid forms of air;
'Tis not that Paſſion, in a ſtyle impure,
Holds the warm ſpirit by a wanton lure:
'Tis ſuffering Virtue's ſympathetic ſway,
That all the fibres of her breaſt obey;
'Tis Action, where Immortals claim no part;
'Tis Nature, grappled to the human heart.
If this firm Sov'reign of the feeling breaſt
Can thus the faſcinated thought arreſt,
And thro' the boſom's deep receſſes pierce,
Ungrac'd, unaided by enchanting Verſe,
Say! ſhall we think, with limited controul,
She wants ſufficient force to ſeize the ſoul,

When Harmony's congenial tones convey
Charms to her voice, that aid its magic ſway?
If Admiration's hand, with eager graſp,
Her darling HOMER's deathleſs volume claſp,
Say to what ſcenes her partial eyes revert!
Say what they firſt explore, and laſt deſert!
The ſcenes that glitter with no heavenly blaze,
Where human agents human feelings raiſe,
While Truth, enamor'd of the lovely line,
Cries to their parent Nature, "Theſe are thine."
When Neptune riſes in Homeric ſtate,
And on their Lord the Powers of Ocean wait;
Tho' pliant Fancy trace the ſteps he trod,
And with a tranſient worſhip own the God,
Yet colder readers with indifference view,
The Sovereign of the deep, and all his vaſſal crew,
Nor feel his watery pomp their mind enlarge,
More than the pageant of my Lord May'r's barge.
But when Achilles' wrongs our eyes engage,
All boſoms burn with ſympathetic rage:
And when thy love parental, Chief of Troy!
Haſtes to relieve the terrors of thy boy,

Our senses in thy fond emotion join,
And every heart's in unison with thine.
Still in the Muse's ear shall Echo ring,
That heavenly Agents are her vital spring?
Those who conclude her winning charms arise
From Beings darting from the distant skies,
Appear to cherish a conceit as vain,
As once was harbour'd in Neanthus' brain,
When he believ'd that harmony must dwell
In the cold concave of the Orphic shell:
The ancient Lyre, to which the Thracian sung,
Whose hallow'd chords were in a temple hung,
The shallow Youth with weak ambition sought,
And of the pilfering Priest the relique bought;
Viewing his treasure with deluded gaze,
He deem'd himself the heir of Orphic praise;
But when his awkward fingers tried to bring
Expected music from the silent string,
Not e'en the milder brutes his discord bore,
But howling dogs the fancied Orpheus tore. *

* Ver. 166. See NOTE II.

When

When the true Poet, in whoſe frame are join'd
Softneſs of Heart and Energy of Mind,
His Epic ſcene's expanſive limit draws,
Faithful to Nature's univerſal laws;
If thro' her various walks he boldly range,
Marking how oft her pliant features change;
If, as ſhe teaches, his quick powers ſupply
Succeſſive pictures to th' aſtoniſh'd eye,
Where nobleſt paſſions nobleſt deeds inſpire,
And radiant ſouls exhibit all their fire;
Where ſofter forms their ſweet attractions blend,
And ſuffering Beauty makes the world her friend;
If thus he build his Rhyme, with varied art,
On each dear intereſt of the human heart,
His genius, by no vain conceits betray'd,
May ſpurn faint Allegory's feeble aid.
Th' Heroic Muſe, in earthly virtue ſtrong,
May drive the hoſt of Angels from her Song,
As her fair Siſter Muſe, the Tragic Queen,
Has baniſh'd Ghoſts from her pathetic ſcene,
Tho' her high ſoul, by SHAKESPEARE's magic ſway'd,
Still bends to buried Denmark's aweful Shade.

If we esteem this Epic Queen so great,
To spare her heavenly train, yet keep her state,
'Tis not our aim, with systematic pride,
To sink their glory, or their powers to hide,
Who add, when folded in the Muse's arms,
Celestial beauty to her earthly charms.

Sublimely fashion'd, by no mortal hands,
The dome of mental Pleasure wide expands:
Form'd to preside o'er its allotted parts,
At different portals stand the separate Arts;
But every portal different paths may gain,
Alike uniting in the mystic Fane.
Contentious mortals on these paths debate;
Some, wrangling on the road, ne'er reach the gate,
While others, arm'd with a despotic rod,
Allow no pass but what themselves have trod.
The noblest spirits, to this foible prone,
Have slander'd powers congenial with their own:
Hence, on a Brother's genius Milton frown'd,
Scorning the graceful chains of final sound,
And to one form confin'd the free sublime,
Insulting Dryden as the Man of Rhyme.

Caprice ſtill gives this laſting ſtruggle life;
Rhyme and Blank Verſe maintain their idle ſtrife:
The friends of one are ſtill the other's foes,
For ſtubborn Prejudice no mercy knows.
As in Religion, Zealots, blindly warm,
Neglect the Eſſence, while they graſp the Form;
Poetic Bigots, thus perverſely wrong,
Think Modes of Verſe comprize the Soul of Song.
If the fine Statuary fill his part
With all the powers of energetic Art;
If to the figures, that, with ſkill exact,
His genius blends in one impaſſion'd act,
If to this Group ſuch ſpeaking force he give,
That ſtartled Nature almoſt cries "They live;"
All tongues with zeal th' enchanting work applaud,
Nor the great Artiſt of due praiſe defraud,
Whether he form'd the rich expreſſive maſs
Of Parian marble, or Corinthian braſs;
For each his powers might faſhion to fulfil
The nobleſt purpoſe of mimetic ſkill;
Each from his ſoul might catch Promethean fire,
And ſpeak his talents, till the world expire.

 'Tis

'Tis thus that MILTON's Verſe, and DRYDEN's Rhyme,
Are proof alike againſt the rage of Time;
Each Maſter modell'd, with a touch ſo bold,
The rude materials which he choſe to mould,
That each his portion to perfection brought,
Accompliſhing the glorious end he ſought.
False to themſelves, and to their intereſt blind,
Are thoſe cold judges, of faſtidious mind,
Who with vain rules the ſuffering Arts would load,
Who, ere they ſmile, conſult the Critic's code;
Where, puzzled by the different doubts they ſee,
(For who ſo oft as Critics diſagree?)
They loſe that pleaſure by free ſpirits ſeiz'd,
In vainly ſettling how they ſhould be pleas'd.
Far wiſer thoſe, who, with a generous joy,
Nor blindly fond, nor petulantly coy,
Follow each movement of the varying Muſe,
Whatever ſtep her airy form may chuſe,
Nor to one march her rapid feet confine,
While eaſe and ſpirit in her geſture join;
Thoſe who facilitate her free deſire,
To melt the heart, or ſet the ſoul on fire;

Who, if her voice to ſimple Nature lean,
And fill with Human forms her Epic ſcene;
Pleas'd with her aim, aſſiſt her moral plan,
And feel with manly ſympathy for Man:
Or if ſhe draw, by Fancy's magic tones,
Ætherial Spirits from their ſapphire thrones,
Her Heavenly ſhapes with willing homage greet,
And aid, with ductile thought, her bright deceit;
For, if the Epic Muſe ſtill wiſh to tower
Above plain Nature's firm and graceful power,
Tho' Critics think her vital powers are loſt
In cold Philoſophy's petrific froſt;
That Magic cannot her ſunk charms reſtore,
That Heaven and Hell can yield her nothing more;
Yet may ſhe dive to many a ſecret ſource
And copious ſpring of viſionary force:
India yet holds a Mythologic mine,
Her ſtrength may open, and her art refine:
Tho' Aſian ſpoils the realms of Europe fill,
Thoſe Eaſtern riches are unrifled ſtill;
Genius may there his courſe of honor run,
And ſpotleſs Laurels in that field be won. *

* Ver. 276. See NOTE III.

Yet nobler aims the Bards of Britain court,
Who ſteer by Freedom's ſtar to Glory's port;
Our gen'rous Iſle, with far ſuperior claim,
Aſks for her Chiefs the palm of Epic fame.
In every realm where'er th' Heroic Muſe
Has deign'd her glowing ſpirit to infuſe,
Her tuneful Sons with civic ſplendor blaze,
The honour'd Heralds of their country's praiſe,
Save in our land, the nation of the earth
Ordain'd to give the brighteſt Heroes birth!—
By ſome ſtrange fate, which rul'd each Poet's tongue,
Her deareſt Worthies yet remain unſung.
Critics there are, who, with a ſcornful ſmile,
Reject the annals of our martial Iſle,
And, dead to patriot Paſſion, coldly deem
They yield for lofty Song no touching theme.
What! can the Britiſh heart, humanely brave,
Feel for the Greek who loſt his female ſlave?
Can it, devoted to a ſavage Chief,
Swell with his rage, and ſoften with his grief?
And ſhall it not with keener zeal embrace
Their brighter cauſe, who, born of Britiſh race,

With the ſtrong cement of the blood they ſpilt,
The ſplendid fane of Britiſh Freedom built?
Bleſt Spirits, who, with kindred fire endued,
Thro' different ages this bright work purſued,
May Art and Genius crown your ſainted band
With that poetic wreath your Deeds demand!
  While, led by Fancy thro' her wide domain,
Our ſteps advance around her Epic plain;
While we ſurvey each laurel that it bore,
And every confine of the realm explore,
See Liberty, array'd in light ſerene,
Pours her rich luſtre o'er th' expanding ſcene!
Thee, Mason, thee ſhe views with fond regard,
And calls to nobler heights her fav'rite Bard.
Tracing a circle with her blazing ſpear,
"Here," cries the Goddeſs, "raiſe thy fabric here,
Build on theſe rocks, that to my reign belong,
The nobleſt baſis of Heroic Song!
Fix here! and, while thy growing works aſcend,
My voice ſhall guide thee, and my arm defend."
As thus ſhe ſpeaks, methinks her high beheſt
Imparts pure rapture to thy conſcious breaſt,

Pure as the joy immortal Newton found,
When Nature led him to her utmoſt bound,
And clearly ſhew'd, where unborn ages lie,
The diſtant Comet to his daring eye;
Pure as the joy the Sire of mortals knew,
When bliſsful Eden open'd on his view,
When firſt he liſten'd to the voice Divine,
And wond'ring heard, "This Paradiſe is thine."
With ſuch delight may'ſt thou her gift receive!
May thy warm heart with bright ambition heave
To raiſe a Temple to her hallow'd name,
Above what Grecian artiſts knew to frame!
Of Engliſh form the ſacred fabric rear,
And bid our Country with juſt rites revere
The Power, who ſheds, in her benignant ſmile,
The brighteſt Glory on our boaſted Iſle!
    Juſtly on thee th' inſpiring Goddeſs calls;
Her mighty taſk each weaker Bard appalls:
'Tis thine, O Mason! with unbaffled ſkill,
Each harder duty of our Art to fill;
'Tis thine, in robes of beauty to array,
And in bright Order's lucid blaze diſplay,

The

The forms that Fancy, to thy wiſhes kind,
Stamps on the tablet of thy clearer mind.
How ſoftly ſweet thy notes of pathos ſwell,
The tender accents of Elfrida tell;
Caractacus proclaims, with Freedom's fire,
How rich the tone of thy ſublimer Lyre;
E'en in this hour, propitious to thy fame,
The rural Deities repeat thy name:
With feſtive joy I hear the ſylvan throng
Hail the completion of their favorite Song,
Thy graceful Song! in honor of whoſe power,
Delighted Flora, in her ſweeteſt bower,
Weaves thy unfading wreath;—with fondeſt care,
Proudly ſhe weaves it, emulouſly fair,
To match that crown, which in the Mantuan grove
The richer Ceres for her VIRGIL wove!
See! his Euridice herſelf once more
Reviſits earth from the Elyſian ſhore!
Behold! ſhe hovers o'er thy echoing glade!
Envy, not love, conducts the penſive Shade,
Who, trembling at thy Lyre's pathetic tone,
Fears leſt Nerina's fame ſurpaſs her own.

Thou happy Bard! whoſe ſweet and potent voice
Can reach all notes within the Poet's choice;
Whoſe vivid ſoul has led thee to infuſe
Dramatic life in the preceptive Muſe;
Since, bleſt alike with Beauty and with Force,
Thou rivall'ſt Virgil in his Sylvan courſe,
O be it thine the higher palm to gain,
And paſs him in the wide Heroic plain!
To ſing, with equal fire, of nobler themes,
To gild Hiſtoric Truth with Fancy's beams!
To Patriot Chiefs unſung thy Lyre devote,
And ſwell to Liberty the lofty note!

With humbler aim, but no ungenerous view,
My ſteps, leſs firm, their lower path purſue;
Of different Arts I ſearch the ample field,
Mark its paſt fruits, and what it yet may yield;
With willing voice the praiſe of Merit ſound,
And bow to Genius wheresoever found;
O'er my free Verſe bid nobleſt names preſide,
Tho' Party's hoſtile lines thoſe names divide;
Party! whoſe murdering ſpirit I abhor,
More ſubtly cruel, and leſs brave than War.

Party! inſidious Fiend! whoſe vapors blind
The light of Juſtice in the brighteſt mind;
Whoſe feveriſh tongue, whence deadly venom flows,
Baſely belies the merit of her foes!
O that my Verſe with magic power were bleſt,
To drive from Learning's field this baleful peſt!
Fond, fruitleſs wiſh! the mighty taſk would foil
The firmeſt ſons of Literary Toil;
In vain a letter'd Hercules might riſe
To cleanſe the ſtable where this Monſter lies:
Yet, if the Imps of her malignant brood,
With all their Parent's acrid gall endu'd;
If Spleen pours forth, to Mockery's apiſh tune,
Her gibing Ballad, and her baſe Lampoon,
On faireſt names, from every blemiſh free,
Save what the jaundic'd eyes of Party ſee;
My glowing ſcorn will execrate the rhyme,
Tho' laughing Humor ſtrike its tuneful chime;
Tho' keeneſt Wit the glitt'ring lines inveſt
With all the ſplendor of the Adder's creſt.
 Sublimer MASON! not to thee belong
The reptile beauties of envenom'd Song.

Thou chief of living Bards! O be it ours,
In ſame tho' different, as of different powers,
Party's dark clouds alike to riſe above,
And reach the firmament of Public Love!
May'ſt thou aſcend Parnaſſus' higheſt mound,
In triumph there the Epic Trumpet ſound;
While, with no envious zeal, I thus aſpire
By juſt applauſe to fan thy purer fire;
And of the Work which Freedom pants to ſee,
Which thy firm Genius claims reſerv'd for thee,
In this frank ſtyle my honeſt thoughts impart,
If not an Artiſt yet a friend to Art.

NOTES.

N O T E S.

NOTES

TO THE

FIRST EPISTLE.

NOTE I. Ver. 7.

SUCH dark decrees have letter'd Bigots penn'd,
Yet ſeiz'd that honor'd name, the Poet's Friend.] Of the ſeveral authors who have written on Epic Poetry, many of the moſt celebrated are more likely to confound and depreſs, than to enlighten and exalt the young Poetical Student. The Poetics of Scaliger, which are little more than a laboured panegyric of Virgil, would lead him to regard the Æneid as the only ſtandard of perfection; and the more elegant and accompliſhed Vida inculcates the ſame puſillanimous leſſon, though in ſpirited and harmonious verſe.

Unus hic ingenio præſtanti gentis Achivæ
Divinos vates longe ſuperavit, et arte,
Aureus immortale ſonans. ſtupet ipſa pavetque,
Quamvis ingentem miretur Græcia Homerum.

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Ergo ipſum ante alios animo venerare Maronem,
Atque unum ſequere, utque potes, veſtigia ſerva!

VIDA.

See how the Grecian Bards, at diſtance thrown,
With reverence bow to this diſtinguiſh'd ſon;
Immortal ſounds his golden lines impart,
And nought can match his Genius but his Art;

E'en Greece turns pale and trembles at his fame,
Which ſhades the luſtre of her Homer's name.

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Hence, ſacred Virgil from thy ſoul adore
Above the reſt, and to thy utmoſt power
Purſue the glorious paths he ſtruck before.

PITT'S Tranſlation.

A Critic, who lately roſe to great eminence in our own country, has endeavoured by a more ſingular method to damp the ardour of inventive Genius, and to annihilate the hopes of all who would aſpire to the praiſe of originality in this higher ſpecies of poetical compoſition. He has attempted to eſtabliſh a Triumvirate in the Epic world, with a perpetuity of dominion. Every reader who is converſant with modern criticiſm will perceive that I allude to the following paſſage in the famous Diſſertation on the ſixth Book of Virgil:—"Juſt as Virgil rivalled Homer, ſo Milton emulated both of them. He found Homer poſſeſſed of the province of Morality; Virgil of Politics; and nothing left for him but that of Religion. This he ſeized, as aſpiring to ſhare with them in the government of the Poetic world: and, by means of the ſuperior dignity of his ſubject, hath gotten to the head of that Triumvirate, which took ſo many ages in forming. Theſe are the three ſpecies of the Epic Poem; for its largeſt ſphere is *human action*, which can be conſidered but in a *moral*, political, or religious view: and Theſe the three *Makers*; for each of their Poems was ſtruck out at a heat, and came to perfection from its firſt eſſay. Here then the grand ſcene was cloſed, and all farther improvements of the Epic at an end."

I apprehend that few critical remarks contain more *abſurdity* (to uſe the favourite expreſſion of the author I have quoted) than the preceding lines. Surely Milton is himſelf a proof that *human action* is not the largeſt ſphere of the Epic Poem; and as to Virgil, his moſt paſſionate admirers muſt allow, that in ſubject and deſign he is much leſs of an original than Camoens or Lucan. But ſuch a critical ſtatute of limitation, if I may call it ſo, is not leſs pernicious than abſurd. To diſfigure the ſphere of Imagination with theſe capricious and arbitrary zones is an injury to ſcience. Such Criticiſm, inſtead of giving ſpirit

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and energy to the laudable ambition of a youthful Poet, can only lead him to ſtart like Macbeth at unreal mockery, and to exclaim, when he is invited by Genius to the banquet, "The Table's full."

NOTE II. Ver. 77.

Thus, at their banquets, fabling Greeks rehearſe
The fancied origin of ſacred Verſe.] For this fable, ſuch as it is, I am indebted to a paſſage in Athenæus, which the curious reader may find in the cloſe of that fanciful and entertaining compiler, page 701 of Caſaubon's edition.

NOTE III. Ver. 207.

Why did the Epic Muſe's ſilent lyre
Shrink from thoſe feats that ſummon'd all her fire?] I have ventured to ſuppoſe that Greece produced no worthy ſucceſſor of Homer, and that her exploits againſt the Perſians were not celebrated by any Poet in a manner ſuitable to ſo ſublime a ſubject;—yet an author named Chærilus is ſaid to have recorded thoſe triumphs of his country in verſe, and to have pleaſed the Athenians ſo highly as to obtain from them a public and pecuniary reward. He is ſuppoſed to have been a cotemporary of the hiſtorian Herodotus. But from the general ſilence of the more early Greek writers concerning the merit of this Poet, we may, I think, very fairly conjecture that his compoſitions were not many degrees ſuperior to thoſe of his unfortunate nameſake, who frequented the court of Alexander the Great, and is ſaid to have ſung the exploits of his Sovereign, on the curious conditions of receiving a piece of gold for every good verſe, and a box on the ear for every bad one. The old Scholiaſt on Horace, who has preſerved this idle ſtory, concludes it by ſaying, that the miſerable Bard was beat to death in conſequence of his contract. Some eminent modern Critics have indeed attempted to vindicate the reputation of the more early Chærilus, who is ſuppoſed to be confounded, both by Horace himſelf, and afterwards by Scaliger, with the Chærilus rewarded by Alexander. Voſſius *, in particular, appears a warm advocate in his behalf, and appeals to various fragments of the ancient Bard

* De Hiſtoricis Græcis.

preserved by Aristotle, Strabo, and others, and to the testimony of Plutarch in his favour. But on consulting the fragments he has referred to, they rather fortify than remove my conjecture. The scrap preserved by Aristotle in his Rhetoric is only half a verse, and quoted without any commendation of its author. The two citations in Strabo amount to little more. The curious reader may also find in Athenæus an Epitaph on Sardanapalus, attributed to this Poet; who is mentioned by the same author as peculiarly addicted to the grosser excesses of the table.——Let us now return to that Chærilus whom Horace has "damn'd to everlasting fame." The judicious and elegant Roman Satirist seems remarkably unjust, in paying a compliment to the poetical judgment of his patron Augustus, at the expence of the Macedonian hero. Alexander appears to have possessed much more poetical spirit, and a higher relish for poetry, than the cold-blooded Octavius. It is peculiarly unfair, to urge his liberality to a poor Poet as a proof that he wanted critical discernment, when he had himself so thoroughly vindicated the delicacy of his taste, by the enthusiastic Bon-mot, that he had rather be the Thersites of Homer than the Achilles of Chærilus.

NOTE IV. Verse 231.

When grave Bossu by System's studied laws
The Grecian Bard's ideal picture draws.] Though Bossu is called "the best explainer of Aristotle, and one of the most learned and judicious of modern critics," by a writer for whose opinions I have much esteem, I cannot help thinking that his celebrated Essay on Epic Poetry is very ill calculated either to guide or to inspirit a young Poet. The absurdity of his advice concerning the mode of forming the fable, by chusing a moral, inventing the incidents, and then searching history for names to suit them, has been sufficiently exposed: and as to his leading idea, concerning the design of Homer in the composition of the Iliad and Odyssey, I apprehend most poetical readers must feel that he is probably mistaken; for it is a conjectural point, and placed beyond the possibility of decision. Perhaps few individuals differ more from each other in their modes of thinking, by the force of education and of national manners, than a modern French Critic and an early Poet of Greece; yet the former will often pretend, with the most decisive air,

to lay open the ſenſorium of an ancient Bard, and to count every link in the chain of his ideas. Thoſe who are moſt acquainted with the movements of imagination, will acknowledge the ſteps of this airy power to be ſo light and evaneſcent in their nature, that perhaps a Poet himſelf, in a few years after finiſhing his work, might be utterly unable to recollect the exact train of thought, or the various minute occurrences which led him to the general deſign, or directed him in the particular parts of his poem. But, in ſpite of the interval of many hundred centuries, the deciſive magic of criticiſm can call up all the ſhadows of departed thought that ever exiſted in his brain, and diſplay, with a moſt aſtoniſhing clearneſs, the preciſe ſtate of his mind in the moment of compoſition.

"Homere," ſays Boſſu, "* voyoit les Grecs pour qui il écrivoit, diviſéz en autant d'etats qu'ils avoient de villes conſiderables: chacune faiſoit un corps à part & avoit ſa forme de gouvernement independamment de toutes les autres. Et toute-fois ces etats differens etoient ſouvent obligéz de ſe reünir comme en un ſeul corps contre leurs ennemis communs. Voila ſans doute deux ſortes de gouvernemens bien differens, pour etre commodement reunis en un corps de morale, & en un ſeul poëme.

"Le poëte en a donc fait deux fables ſeparées. L'une eſt pour toute la Grece reünie en un ſeul corps, mais compoſée de parties independantes les unes des autres, comme elles etoient en effet; & l'autre eſt pour chaque etat particulier, tels qu'ils etoient pendant la paix, ſans ce premier rapport & ſans la neceſſité de ſe reünir.

"Homere a donc pris pour le fond de ſa fable, cette grande verité, que la Meſintelligence des princes ruine leurs propres etats."

On the Odyſſey Boſſu remarks, "Que la verité qui ſert de fond à cette fiction, & qui avec elle compoſe la fable, eſt, que l'abſence d'une perſonne hors de chez ſoi, ou qui n'a point l'œil à ce qui s'y fait, y cauſe de grands deſordres †."

On the mature conſideration of theſe two moral axioms, the Critic ſuppoſes the ſublime Bard to have begun his reſpective Poems; for Homer, continues he, "‡ n'avoit point d'autre deſſein que de former

* Livre i. chap. 8. † Livre i. chap. 10. ‡ Livre i. chap. 13.

agreablement les mœurs de ses Citoïens, en leur proposant, comme dit Horace, ce qui est utile ou pernicieux, ce qui est honnete ou ce qui ne l'est pas: - - - il n'a entrepris de raconter aucune action particuliere d'Achille ou d'Ulysse. Il a fait la fable et le dessein de ses poemes, sans penser à ces princes; & ensuite il leur a fait l'honneur de donner leurs noms aux heros qu'il avoit feints."

The preceding remarks of this celebrated Critic have been frequently admired as an ingenious conjecture, which most happily illustrates the real purpose of Homer. To me they appear so much the reverse, that if I ventured to adopt any decided opinion on a point so much darkened by the clouds of antiquity, I should rather incline to the idea which Bossu affects to explode, and suppose the Poems of Homer intended panegyrics on the very princes whom the Critic affirms he never thought of while he was designing the works which have made them immortal.

There is a striking passage on this subject in a dialogue of Plato, which I shall enlarge upon, for two reasons: 1st, As it proves that the latter persuasion concerning the purpose of Homer was entertained at Athens; and 2dly, Because it gives me a pleasing opportunity of supporting the learned Madame Dacier against an ill-grounded censure of a late English critic. In her Preface to the Odyssey, she asserts that the judgment of antiquity decided in favor of the Iliad; and she appeals to part of the sentence in Plato to which I have alluded, as a proof of her assertion. Mr. Wood, in a note to the Introduction of his Essay on Homer, endeavours to shew the insufficiency of this proof; and still farther, to convince us that Madame Dacier was utterly mistaken in her sense of the passage to which she appealed. If he ventures to contradict this learned lady, he does not however insult her with that insolent pertness with which she is frequently treated in the notes to Pope's Homer; and which, for the honour of our English Poet, I will not suppose to be his. But though Mr. Wood endeavours to support his opinion by argument, I apprehend that he is himself mistaken, and that Madame Dacier is perfectly right in understanding the words of Socrates in their literal sense, without the least mixture of irony. It is true, indeed, that the aim of Socrates, in the course of the dialogue, is to ridicule the presumption and ignorance of the sophist Hippias, in the most

most ironical manner; but the particular speech on which Madame Dacier founds her opinion, is a plain and simple address to Eudicus, before he enters on his debate with the Sophist. It turns on the most simple circumstance, the truth of which Eudicus could hardly be ignorant of, namely, the sentiments of his own father concerning the Poems of Homer. As these sentiments are such as I believe most admirers of the ancient Bard have entertained on the point in question, I perfectly agree with Madame Dacier in thinking that Socrates means to be literal and serious, when he says to Eudicus, Του σου πατρος Απημαντου ηκουον οτι η Ιλιας καλλιον ειη ποιημα τῷ Ομηρῳ η η Οδυσσεια· τοσουτῳ δε καλλιον οσῳ αμεινων Αχιλλευς Οδυσσεως ειη. εκατερον γαρ των ποιηματων το μεν εις Οδυσσεα εφη πεποιησθαι, το δ' εις Αχιλλεα. Plat. Hip. min. edit. Serrani, tom. i. pag. 363. "I have heard your father Apemantus say, that the Iliad of Homer was a finer poem than his Odyssey, and as far surpassed it in excellence as the virtue of Achilles surpassed the virtue of Ulysses; for those two poems, he said, were purposely composed in honour of those two heroes: the Odyssey, to shew the virtues of Ulysses; the Iliad, those of Achilles." Plato's Lesser Hippias, translated by Sydenham, page 13.

Let us now return to Bossu; whose opinion concerning the purpose of Homer we may venture to oppose, supported as it is by an ingenious interpretation of some ambiguous passages in the Poetics of Aristotle; and this opposition may be grounded, not so much on the sentence which I have quoted from Plato, as on the probable conduct of Epic composition in the early ages of poetry. In such periods as produced the talents of Virgil and of Dryden, when all the arts of refined flattery were perfectly understood, we can easily conceive that they might both be tempted to compliment the reigning monarch under the mask of such heroic names as history could supply, and their genius accommodate to their purpose. We find accordingly, that the Roman Bard is supposed to have drawn a flattering portrait of his Emperor in the character of Æneas, and that the English Poet has, with equal ingenuity, enwrapt the dissolute Charles the Second in the Jewish robes of King David. But in so rude an age as we must admit that of Homer to have been; when the Poet was certainly more the child of Nature than of Art; when he had no history to consult, perhaps no patron to flatter, and no critics

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to elude or obey; in ſuch an age, may we not more naturally conjecture, that poetical compoſition was neither laboured in its form, nor deep in its deſign? that, inſtead of being the ſlow and ſyſtematic product of political reaſoning, it was the quick and artleſs offspring of a ſtrong and vivifying fancy, which, brooding over the tales of tradition, ſoon raiſed them into ſuch life and beauty, as muſt ſatisfy and enchant a warlike and popular audience, ever ready to liſten with delight to the heroic feats of their anceſtors.

If the learned Boſſu appears unfortunate in his ſyſtem concerning the purpoſe of Homer, he may be thought ſtill more ſo in his attempt to analyze the Divinities of Virgil; for, to throw new light on the convention of the Gods, in the opening of the tenth Æneid, he very ſeriouſly informs us, that "* Venus is divine mercy, or the love of God towards virtuous men; and Juno his juſtice."

I cannot conclude theſe very free ſtrictures on a celebrated author, without bearing a pleaſing teſtimony to the virtues of the man.—Boſſu is allowed by the biographers of his country to have been remarkable for the mildeſt manners and moſt amiable diſpoſition; totally free from that imperious and bigotted attachment to ſpeculative opinions, which the ſcience he cultivated is ſo apt to produce. He endeared himſelf to Boileau by a generous act of friendſhip, that led to an intimacy between them, which was diſſolved only by the death of the former, in 1680.

NOTE V. Verse 244.

Imputes to Virgil his own dark conceit.] As it requires much leiſure to examine, and more ſkill to unravel an intricate hypotheſis, twiſted into a long and laboured chain of quotation and argument, the Diſſertation on the ſixth Book of Virgil remained for ſome time unrefuted. The public very quietly acquieſced in the ſtrange poſition of its author, "That Æneas's adventure to the infernal ſhades, is no other than a figurative deſcription of his initiation into the Myſteries; and particularly a very exact one of the ſpectacles of the Eleuſinian." At length a ſuperior but anonymous Critic aroſe, who, in one of the moſt judicious

* Book v. chap. 1.

and ſpirited eſſays that our nation has produced on a point of claſſical literature, completely overturned this ill-founded edifice, and expoſed the arrogance and futility of its aſſuming architect. The Eſſay I allude to is entitled "Critical Obſervations on the Sixth Book of the Æneid;" printed for Elmſly, 1770: and as this little publication is, I believe, no longer to be purchaſed, the curious reader may thank me for tranſcribing a few of its moſt ſtriking paſſages.

Having ridiculed, with great ſpirit and propriety, Warburton's general idea of the Æneid as a political inſtitute, and his ill-ſupported aſſertion, that both the ancient and modern poets afforded Virgil a pattern for introducing the Myſteries into this famous epiſode, the author proceeds to examine how far the Critic's hypotheſis of initiation may be ſupported or overthrown by the text of the Poet. "It is," ſays he, "from extrinſical circumſtances that we may expect the diſcovery of Virgil's allegory. Every one of theſe circumſtances perſuades me, that Virgil deſcribed a real, not a mimic world, and that the ſcene lay in the Infernal Shades, and not in the Temple of Ceres.

"The ſingularity of the Cumæan ſhores muſt be preſent to every traveller who has once ſeen them. To a ſuperſtitious mind, the thin cruſt, vaſt cavities, ſulphureous ſteams, poiſonous exhalations, and fiery torrents, may ſeem to trace out the narrow confine of the two worlds. The lake Avernus was the chief object of religious horror; the black woods which ſurrounded it, when Virgil firſt came to Naples, were perfectly ſuited to feed the ſuperſtition of the people *. It was generally believed, that this deadly flood was the entrance of Hell †; and an oracle was once eſtabliſhed on its banks, which pretended, by magic rites, to call up the departed ſpirits ‡. Æneas, who revolved a more daring enterprize, addreſſes himſelf to the prieſteſs of thoſe dark regions. Their converſation may perhaps inform us whether an initiation, or a deſcent to the Shades, was the object of this enterprize. She endeavours to deter the hero, by ſetting before him all the dangers of his raſh undertaking.

* Strabo, l. v. p. 168.

† Sil. Ital. l. xii.

‡ Diod. Siculus, l. iv. p. 267. edit. Weſſeling.

—Facilis

——— Facilis descensus Averni;
Noctes atque dies patet atri janua Ditis:
Sed revocare gradum, superasque evadere ad auras,
Hoc opus, hic labor est *.

"These particulars are absolutely irreconcileable with the idea of initiation, but perfectly agreeable to that of a real descent. That every step and every instant may lead us to the grave, is a melancholy truth. The Mysteries were only open at stated times, a few days at most in the course of a year. The mimic descent of the Mysteries was laborious and dangerous, the return to light easy and certain. In real death this order is inverted.

——— Pauci quos æquus amavit
Jupiter, aut ardens evexit ad æthera virtus,
Diis geniti, potuere †.

These heroes, as we learn from the Speech of Æneas, were Hercules, Orpheus, Castor and Pollux, Theseus, and Pirithous. Of all these antiquity believed, that, before their death, they had seen the habitations of the dead; nor indeed will any of the circumstances tally with a supposed initiation. The adventure of Eurydice, the alternate life of the Brothers, and the forcible intrusion of Alcides, Theseus, and Pirithous, would mock the endeavours of the most subtle critic, who should try to melt them down into his favourite Mysteries. The exploits of Hercules, who triumphed over the King of Terrors,

Tartareum ille manu custodem in vincla petivit
Ipsius a solio regis, traxitque trementem ‡.

was a wild imagination of the Greeks §; but it was the duty of ancient Poets to adopt and embellish these popular traditions; and it is the interest of every man of taste to acquiesce in *their poetical fictions*."

"Virgil has borrowed, as usual, from Homer his episode of the

* Æneid vi. 126. † Ibid. vi. 129. ‡ Ibid. vi. 395.
§ Homer Odyss. l. xi. ver. 623. Apoll. Bib. l. ii. c. 5.

Infernal Shades, and, as usual, has infinitely improved what the Grecian had invented. If among a profusion of beauties I durst venture to point out the most striking beauties of the sixth Book, I should perhaps observe, 1. That after accompanying the hero through the silent realms of Night and Chaos, we see, with astonishment and pleasure, a new creation bursting upon us. 2. That we examine, with a delight which springs from the love of virtue, the just empire of Minos, in which the apparent irregularities of the present system are corrected; where the patriot who died for his country is happy, and the tyrant who oppressed it is miserable. 3. As we interest ourselves in the hero's fortunes, we share his feelings:—the melancholy Palinurus, the wretched Deiphobus, the indignant Dido, the Græcian kings, who tremble at his presence, and the venerable Anchises, who embraces his pious son, and displays to his sight the future glories of his race: all these objects affect us with a variety of pleasing sensations.

"Let us for a moment obey the mandate of our great Critic, and consider these aweful scenes as a mimic shew, exhibited in the Temple of Ceres, by the contrivance of the priest, or, if he pleases, of the legislator. Whatever was animated (I appeal to every reader of taste) whatever was terrible, or whatever was pathetic, evaporates into lifeless allegory.

——— Tenuem sine viribus umbram.
——————— Dat inania verba,
Dat sine mente sonum, gressusque effingit euntis.

The end of philosophy is truth; the end of poetry is pleasure. I willingly adopt any interpretation which adds new beauties to the original; I assist in persuading myself that it is just, and could almost shew the same indulgence to the Critic's as to the Poet's fiction. But should a grave Doctor lay out fourscore pages in explaining away the sense and spirit of Virgil, I should have every inducement to believe that Virgil's soul was very different from the Doctor's."

Having shewn, in this spirited manner, how far the hypothesis of the Critic is inconsistent with particular passages, and with the general character of the Poet, the Essayist proceeds to alledge "two simple reasons,

reaſons, which perſuade him that Virgil has not revealed the ſecret of the Eleuſinian myſteries: the firſt is *his ignorance*, and the ſecond *his diſcretion*." The author then proves, by very ingenious hiſtorical arguments, 1ſt, That it is probable the Poet was never initiated himſelf; and, 2dly, That if he were ſo, it is more probable that he would not have violated the laws both of religion and of honour, in betraying the ſecret of the Myſteries; particularly, as that ſpecies of profanation is mentioned with abhorrence by a cotemporary Poet.

> ———Vetabo, qui Cereris ſacrum
> Vulgârit arcanæ, ſub iiſdem
> Sit trabibus, fragilemque mecum
> Solvat phaſelum.
>
> Hor. l. iii. od. 2.

When Horace compoſed the Ode which contains the preceding paſſage, "the Æneid (continues my author) and particularly the ſixth Book, were already known to the public *. The deteſtation of the wretch who reveals the Myſteries of Ceres, though expreſſed in general terms, muſt be applied by all Rome to the author of the ſixth Book of the Æneid. Can we ſeriouſly ſuppoſe that Horace would have branded with ſuch wanton infamy one of the men in the world, whom he loved and honoured the moſt † ?

"Nothing remains to ſay, except that Horace was himſelf ignorant of his friend's allegorical meaning; which the Biſhop of Glouceſter has ſince revealed to the world. It may be ſo; yet, for my own part, I ſhould be very well ſatisfied with underſtanding Virgil no better than Horace did."

Such is the forcible reaſoning of this ingenious and ſpirited writer. I have been tempted to tranſcribe theſe conſiderable portions of his Work, by an idea (perhaps an ill-founded one) that the circulation of his little Pamphlet has not been equal to its merit. But if it has been in any degree neglected by our country, it has not eſcaped

* Donat. in Virgil. Propert. l. ii. el. xxv. v. 66.

† Hor. l. i. od. 3. l. i. ſerm. v. ver. 39, &c.

the

the reſearches, or wanted the applauſe, of a learned and judicious foreigner. Profeſſor Heyne, the late accurate and accompliſhed Editor of Virgil, has mentioned it, in his Comments to the ſixth Book of the Æneid, with the honour it deſerves. He remarks, indeed, that the Author has cenſured the learned Prelate with ſome little acrimony; "Paullo acrius quam velis." But what lover of poetry, unbiaſſed by perſonal connection, can ſpeak of Warburton without ſome marks of indignation? If I have alſo alluded to this famous Commentator with a contemptuous aſperity, it ariſes from the perſuaſion that he has ſullied the page of every Poet whom he pretended to illuſtrate; and that he frequently degraded the uſeful and generous profeſſion of Criticiſm into a mean inſtrument of perſonal malignity: or (to uſe the more forcible language of his greateſt antagoniſt) that he "inveſted himſelf in the high office of Inquiſitor General and Supreme Judge of the Opinions of the Learned; which he aſſumed and exerciſed with a ferocity and deſpotiſm without example in the Republic of Letters, and hardly to be paralleled among the diſciples of Dominic *." It is the juſt lot of tyrants to be deteſted; and of all uſurpers, the literary deſpot is the leaſt excuſable, as he has not the common tyrannical plea of neceſſity or intereſt to alledge in his behalf; for the prevalence of *his edicts* will be found to ſink in proportion to the arbitrary tone with which they are pronounced. The fate of Warburton is a ſtriking inſtance of this important truth. What havock has the courſe of very few years produced in that pile of imperious criticiſm which he had heaped together! Many of his notes on Shakeſpeare have already reſigned their place to the ſuperior comments of more accompliſhed Critics; and perhaps the day is not far diſtant, when the volumes of Pope himſelf will ceaſe to be a repoſitory for the lumber of his friend. The ſevereſt enemies of Warburton muſt indeed allow, that ſeveral of his remarks on his Poetical Patron are entitled to preſervation, by their uſe or beauty; but the greater part, I apprehend, are equally deſtitute of both: and how far the Critic was capable of diſgracing the Poet, muſt be evident to every reader who recollects that the nonſenſe in the Eſſay on Criticiſm, where

* Letter to Warburton by a late Profeſſor, &c. page 9. 2d edition.

Pegaſus is made to *ſnatch a grace*, which is juſtly cenſured by Dr. Warton, was firſt introduced into the poem by an arbitrary tranſpoſition of the editor.

Though arrogance is perhaps the moſt ſtriking and characteriſtical defect in the compoſition of this aſſuming Commentator, he had certainly other critical failings of conſiderable importance; and it may poſſibly be rendering ſome little ſervice to the art which he profeſſed, to inveſtigate the peculiarities in this ſingular writer, which conſpire to plunge him in the crowd of thoſe *evaneſcent critics* (if I may uſe ſuch an expreſſion) whom his friend Pope beheld in ſo clear a viſion, that he ſeems to have given us a prophetical portrait of his own Commentator.

> Critics I ſaw, that others' names efface,
> And fix their own, with labour, in the place;
> Their own, like others', ſoon their place reſign'd,
> Or diſappear'd, and left the firſt behind.

I ſhall therefore hazard a few farther obſervations, not only on this famous Critic of our age and country, but on the two greater names of antiquity, to each of whom he has been declared ſuperior by the partial voice of enthuſiaſtic friendſhip. I wiſh not to offend his moſt zealous adherents; and, though I cannot but conſider him as a literary uſurper, I ſpeak of him as a great Hiſtorian ſaid of more exalted tyrants, ſine ira et ſtudio, quorum cauſas procul habeo.——There ſeem to be three natural endowments requiſite in the formation of an accompliſhed critic;—ſtrong underſtanding, lively imagination, and refined ſenſibility. The firſt was the characteriſtic of Ariſtotle, and by the conſent of all ages he is allowed to have poſſeſſed it in a ſuperlative degree. May I be pardoned for the opinion, that he enjoyed but a very moderate portion of the *other two?* I would not abſolutely ſay that he had neither Fancy nor Feeling; but that his imagination was *not brilliant*, and that his ſenſibility was not exquiſite, may I think be fairly preſumed from the general tenor of his proſe; nor does the little relique of his poetry contradict the idea. The two qualities in which Ariſtotle may be ſuppoſed defective, were the very two which peculiarly diſtinguiſh Longinus; who certainly wanted not underſtanding, though he might not poſſeſs the philoſophi-

cal

cal ſagacity of the Stagyrite. When conſidered in every point of view, he appears the moſt conſummate character among the Critics of antiquity. If Warburton wore any reſemblance to either of theſe mighty names, I apprehend it muſt be to the former, and perhaps in imagination he was ſuperior to Ariſtotle; but, of the three qualities which I have ventured to conſider as requiſite in the perfect Critic, I conceive him to have been miſerably deficient in the laſt, and certainly the moſt eſſential of the three; for, as the great Commentator of Horace has philoſophically and truly remarked, in a note to that Poet, "Feeling, or Sentiment, is not only the ſureſt, but the ſole ultimate arbiter of works of genius *." A man may poſſeſs an acute underſtanding and a lively imagination, without being a ſound Critic; and this truth perhaps cannot be more clearly ſhewn than in the writings of Warburton. His underſtanding was undoubtedly acute, his imagination was lively; but Imagination and Sentiment are by no means ſynonymous; and he certainly wanted thoſe finer feelings which conſtitute accuracy of diſcernment, and a perfect perception of literary excellence. In conſequence of this defect, inſtead of ſeizing the real ſenſe and intended beauties of an author, he frequently followed the caprices of his own active fancy, which led him in queſt of ſecret meanings and myſterious alluſions; theſe he readily found, and his powers of underſtanding enabled him to dreſs them up in a plauſible and ſpecious form, and to perſuade many readers that he was (what he believed himſelf to be) the reſtorer of genuine Criticiſm. As a farther proof that he was deſtitute of refined ſenſibility, I might alledge the peculiarity of his diction, which, as Dr. Johnſon has very juſtly remarked, is coarſe and impure. Perhaps it may be found, that in proportion as authors have enjoyed the quality which I ſuppoſe him to have wanted, they have been more or leſs diſtinguiſhed by the eaſe, the elegance, and the beauty of their language: were I required to fortify this conjecture by examples, I ſhould produce the names of Virgil and Racine, of Fenelon and Addiſon—that Addiſon, who, though inſulted by the Commentator of Pope with the names of an indifferent Poet and a worſe Critic, was, I think, as much ſuperior to his inſulter in critical taſte, and in ſolidity of judgment, as he con-

* Notes on the Epiſtle to Auguſtus, ver. 210.

feſſedly

feſſedly was in the harmony of his ſtyle, and in all the finer graces of beautiful compoſition.

NOTE VI. Verse 257.

'Tis ſaid by one, who, with this candid claim,
Has gain'd no fading wreath of critic fame.] Theſe, and the ſix ſubſequent lines, allude to the following paſſage in Dr. Warton's Eſſay on Pope. "I conclude theſe reflections with a remarkable fact. In no poliſhed nation, after Criticiſm has been much ſtudied, and the rules of writing eſtabliſhed, has any very extraordinary work ever appeared. This has viſibly been the caſe in Greece, in Rome, and in France, after Ariſtotle, Horace, and Boileau had written their Arts of Poetry. In our own country, the rules of the Drama, for inſtance, were never more completely underſtood than at preſent; yet what unintereſting, though faultleſs, Tragedies have we lately ſeen? ſo much better is our judgment than our execution. How to account for the fact here mentioned, adequately and juſtly, would be attended with all thoſe difficulties that await diſcuſſions relative to the productions of the human mind, and to the delicate and ſecret cauſes that influence them; whether or no the natural powers be not confined and debilitated by that timidity and caution which is occaſioned by a rigid regard to the dictates of art; or whether that philoſophical, that geometrical, and ſyſtematical ſpirit ſo much in vogue, which has ſpread itſelf from the ſciences even into polite literature, by conſulting only *reaſon*, has not diminiſhed and deſtroyed *ſentiment*, and made our poets write from and to the *head*, rather than the heart; or whether, laſtly, when juſt models, from which the rules have neceſſarily been drawn, have once appeared, ſucceeding writers, by vainly and ambitiouſly ſtriving to ſurpaſs thoſe juſt models, and to ſhine and ſurpriſe, do not become ſtiff and forced, and affected in their thoughts and diction." Warton's Eſſay, page 209, 3d edition.——I admire this ingenious and modeſt reaſoning; but, for the honour of that ſeverer art, which this pleaſing writer has the happy talent to enliven and embelliſh, I will venture to ſtart ſome doubts concerning the fact itſelf for which he endeavours to account. Perhaps our acquaintance with thoſe writings of Greece and Rome, which were ſubſequent to Ariſtotle and Horace, is not ſufficiently perfect to decide the point either way in reſpect

to thoſe countries. But with regard to France, may we not aſſert, that her poetical productions, which aroſe after the publication of Boileau's Didactic Eſſay, are at leaſt equal, if not ſuperior, to thoſe which preceded that period? If the Henriade of Voltaire is not a fine Epic poem, it is allowed to be the beſt which the French have to boaſt; not to mention the dramatic works of that extraordinary and univerſal author. If this remarkable fact may indeed be found true, I ſhould rather ſuppoſe it to ariſe from the irritable nature of the poetic ſpirit, ſo peculiarly averſe to reſtraint and controul. The Bard who could gallop his Pegaſus over a free and open plain, might be eager to engage in ſo pleaſing an exerciſe; but he who obſerved the direction-poſts ſo thickly and ſo perverſely planted, that, inſtead of aſſiſting his career, they muſt probably occaſion his fall, would eaſily be tempted to deſcend from his ſteed, and to decline the courſe. Let me illuſtrate this conjecture by a ſtriking fact, in the very words of the Poet juſt mentioned, who was by no means deficient in poetical confidence, and who has left us the following anecdote of himſelf, in that pleaſing little anonymous work entitled, Commentaire Hiſtorique ſur les Oeuvres de l' Auteur de la Henriade. "Il lut un jour pluſieurs chants de ce poeme chez le jeune Préſident de Maiſons, ſon intime ami. On l'impatienta par des objections; il jetta ſon manuſcrit dans le feu. Le Préſident Hénaut l'en retira avec peine. "Souvenez vous (lui dit Mr. Hénaut) dans une de ſes lettres, que c'eſt moi qui ai ſauvé la Henriade, et qu'il m'en a couté une belle paire de manchettes."

To return to the Eſſay on Pope.—I rejoice that the amiable Critic has at length obliged the public with the concluſion of his moſt engaging and ingenious work: he has the ſingular talent to inſtruct and to pleaſe even thoſe readers who are moſt ready to revolt from the opinion which he endeavours to eſtabliſh; and he has in ſome degree atoned for that exceſs of ſeverity which his firſt volume diſcovered, and which ſunk the reputation of Pope in the eyes of many, who judge not for themſelves, even far below that mortifying level to which he meant to reduce it. Had Pope been alive, to add this ſpirited eſſay to the bundle of writings againſt himſelf which he is ſaid to have collected, he muſt have felt, that, like the dagger of Brutus, it gave the moſt painful blow, from the character of the aſſailant:

"All

"All the conspirators, save only he,
Did that they did in envy of great Cæsar;
He, only, in a general honest thought,
And common good to all, made one of them."

Yet Pope ascended not the throne of Poetry by usurpation, but was seated there by a legal title; of which I shall speak farther in a subsequent note.

NOTE VII. VERSE 359.

His hallow'd subject, by that Law forbid,
Might still have laid in silent darkness hid.] Boileau's Art of Poetry made its first appearance in 1673, six years after the publication of Paradise Lost. The verses of the French Poet to which I have particularly alluded are these:

C'est donc bien vainement que nos auteurs décus,
Bannissant de leurs vers ces ornemens reçus,
Pensent faire agir Dieu, ses saints, et ses prophetes,
Comme ces dieux éclos du cerveau des Poëtes;
Mettent à chaque pas le lecteur en enfer;
N'offrent rien qu' Astaroth, Belzebuth, Lucifer.
De la foi d'un Chrétien les mysteres terribles
D'ornemens egayés, ne sont point susceptibles.
L'Evangile à l'esprit n' offre de tous côtés
Que penitence à faire, et tourmens merités:
Et de vos fictions le mêlange coupable,
Même à ses vérités donne l' air de la fable.
Et quel objet enfin à presenter aux yeux
Que le Diable toujours hurlant contre les cieux,
Qui de votre héros veut rabaisser la gloire,
Et souvent avec Dieu balance la victoire.

Poetique de DESPREAUX, chant iii. ver. 193, &c.

The preceding lines, which are said to have been levelled at the Clovis of Desmaretz, appear so pointed against the subject of Milton, that we might almost believe them intended as a satire on our divine Bard.

There is nothing in Boileau's admirable Didactic Eſſay ſo liable to objection as the whole paſſage concerning Epic poetry. His patronage of the old Pagan divinities, and his oblique recommendation of Claſſical heroes, are alike exceptionable. Even a higher name than Boileau has failed in framing precepts for the Epic Muſe. The maxims delivered by Taſſo himſelf, in his Diſcourſe on Epic poetry, are ſo far from perfect, that an agreeable and judicious French critic has very juſtly ſaid of him, "S'il eût mis ſa theorie en pratique, ſon poeme n'auroit pas tant de charmes *." I am not ſo vain as to think of ſucceeding in the point where theſe immortal authors have failed; and I muſt beg my reader to remember, that the preſent work is by no means intended as a code of laws for the Epic poet; it is not my deſign

To write receipts how poems may be made.

For I think the writer who would condeſcend to frame this higher ſpecies of compoſition according to the exact letter of any directions whatever, may be moſt properly referred to that admirable receipt for an Epic poem with which Martinus Scriblerus will happily ſupply him. My ſerious deſire is to examine and refute the prejudices which have produced, as I apprehend, the neglect of the Heroic Muſe: I wiſh to kindle in our Poets a warmer ſenſe of national honour, with ambition to excel in the nobleſt province of poeſy. If my eſſay ſhould excite that generous enthuſiaſm in the breaſt of any young poetic genius, ſo far from wiſhing to confine him by any arbitrary dictates of my own imagination, I ſhould rather ſay to him, in the words of Dante's Virgil,

Non aſpettar mio dir più, nè mio cenno
Libero, dritto, ſano è tuo arbitrio,
E fallo fora non fare a ſuo ſenno.

NOTE VIII. VERSE 377.

Who ſcorn'd all limits to his work aſſign'd,
Save by th' inſpiring God who rul'd his mind.] "On foot, with a lance in his hand, the Emperor himſelf led the ſolemn proceſſion, and directed

* Marmontel Poetique Françoiſe.

the line, which was traced as the boundary of the destined capital; till the growing circumference was observed with astonishment by the assistants, who at length ventured to observe, that he had already exceeded the most ample measure of a great city. "I shall still advance," replied Constantine, "till he, the invisible guide who marches before me, thinks proper to stop."

GIBBON, Vol. II. page 11.

END OF THE NOTES TO THE FIRST EPISTLE.

NOTES

NOTES

TO THE

SECOND EPISTLE.

NOTE I. VERSE 28.

WE see thy fame traduc'd by Gallic wit.] Homer, like most transcendent characters, has found detractors in every age. We learn from a passage in the life of Socrates by Diogenes Laertius, that the great Poet had, in his life-time, an adversary named Sagaris, or Syagrus; and his calumniator Zoilus is proverbially distinguished. In the Greek Anthologia, there is a sepulchral inscription on a slanderer of the sovereign Bard, which, for its enthusiastic singularity, I shall present to the reader.

Εις Παρθενιον Φωκαεα εις Ομηρον παροινησαντα.

Ει και υπο χθονι κειται, ομως ετι και κατα πισσαν
  Του μιαρογλωσσου χευατε Παρθενιου,
Ουνεκα Πιεριδεσσιν ενημεσε μυρια κεινα
  Φλεγματα, και μυσαρων απλυσιην ελεγων.
Ηλασε και μανιης επι δη τοσον, ωστ' αγορευσαι
  Πηλον Οδυσσειην και βατον Ιλιαδα.
Τοιγαρ υποζοφιαισιν Ερινυσιν αμμεσον ηπται
  Κωκυτου, κλοιω λαιμον απαγχομενος.

Anthologia, p. 70. Edit. Oxon. 1766.

On

On Parthenius the Phocensian, who calumniated Homer.

Here, though deep buried he can rail no more,
Pour burning pitch, on base Parthenius pour;
Who on the sacred Muses dar'd to spirt
His frothy venom and poetic dirt:
Who said of Homer, in his frantic scorn,
The Odyssey was mud, the Iliad thorn:
For this, dark Furies, in your snakes enroll,
And through Cocytus drag the sland'rous soul.

Parthenius, say the Commentators, was a disciple of Dionysius of Alexandria, who flourished under Nero and Trajan. Erycius, the author of the inscription, is supposed to have lived in the same age. Among the modern adversaries of Homer, the French are most remarkable for their severity and injustice: nor is it surprising, that the nation which has displayed the faintest sparks of Epic fire, should be the most solicitous to reduce the oppressive splendor of this exalted luminary. The most depreciating remarks on genius, in every walk, are generally made by those who are the least able to prove its rivals; and often, perhaps, not so much from the prevalence of envious malignity, as from the want of vivid and delicate perception. The merits and the failings of Homer were agitated in France with all the heat and acrimony of a theological dispute. Madame Dacier distinguished herself in the contest by her uncommon talents and erudition: she combated for the Grecian Bard with the spirit of Minerva defending the Father of the Gods. It must however be confest, that she sometimes overstepped the modesty of wisdom, and caught, unwarily, the scolding tone of Juno. It is indeed amusing, to observe a people, who pique themselves on their extreme politeness, and censure Homer for the gross behaviour of his Gods, engaging among themselves in a squabble concerning this very Poet, with all the unrefined animosity of his Olympian Synod. In the whole controversy there is nothing more worthy of remembrance and of praise, than the lively elegance and the pleasing good-humour of Mr. de la Motte, who, though not one of the most exalted, was certainly one of the most amiable, characters in the literary world; and made a generous return to the severity of his female antagonist, by writing an ode in her praise.

Voltaire

Voltaire has pointed out, with his uſual ſpirit, the failings of La Motte in his Abridgement of the Iliad; but he has frequently fallen himſelf into ſimilar defects, and is equally unjuſt to Homer, againſt whom he has levelled the moſt bitter ſarcaſms, both in proſe and verſe. Voltaire attacking Homer, is like Paris ſhooting his arrow at the heel of Achilles: the two Poets are as unequal as the two ancient Warriors; yet Homer, like Achilles, may have his vulnerable ſpot; but with this happy difference, that although the ſhaft of ridicule, which is pointed againſt him, may be tinged with venom, its wound cannot be mortal. Perhaps no better anſwer can be made to all thoſe who amuſe themſelves with writing againſt Homer, than the following reply of Madame Dacier to the Abbé Terraſſon, who had attacked her favourite Bard in two abuſive volumes:—" Que Monſieur l'Abbé Terraſſon trouve Homere ſot, ridicule, extravagant, ennuyeux, c'eſt ſon affaire, le public jugera ſi c'eſt un defaut à Homere de deplaire à M. l'Abbé Terraſſon, ou à M. l'Abbé Terraſſon de ne pas gouter Homere."

NOTE II. VERSE 85.

E'en Socrates himſelf, that pureſt Sage,
Imbib'd his Wiſdom from thy moral page.] Dio Chryſoſtom, in one of his orations, has called Socrates the diſciple of Homer, and drawn a ſhort parallel of their reſpective merits; obſerving in honour of both, "Ομηρος Ποιητης γεγονεν οιος ȣδεις αλλος, Σωκρατης δε Φιλοσοφος."

DION. CHRYS. p. 559.

NOTE III. VERSE 119.

How high ſoe'er ſhe leads his daring flight, &c.] I mean not to injure the dignity of Pindar by this aſſertion. Though Quinctilian, in drawing the character of the Grecian Lyric Poets, has given him high pre-eminence in that choir, we may, I think, very fairly conjecture that ſome odes of Alcæus and Steſichorus were not inferior to thoſe of the Theban Bard, who is ſaid to have been repeatedly vanquiſhed in a poetical conteſt by his female antagoniſt Corinna. The abſurd jealouſy of our ſex concerning literary talents, has led ſome eminent writers to queſtion the merits of Corinna, as Olearius has obſerved, in his Diſſertation on the female Poets of Greece. But her glory ſeems to have been fully eſtabliſhed

by

by the public memorial of her picture, exhibited in her native city, and adorned with a ſymbol of her victory. Pauſanias, who ſaw it, ſuppoſes her to have been one of the handſomeſt women of her time; and the ingenuity of ſome Critics imputes her ſucceſs in the poetical conteſt to the influence of her beauty. They have taken ſome liberties leſs pardonable with her literary reputation, and, by their curious comments on a ſingle Greek ſyllable, made the ſublime Pindar call his fair rival *a Sow*, though the unfortunate word συνεκαλει, which may be twiſted into that meaning, ſignifies, in its more obvious conſtruction, that the Poet challenged his ſucceſsful antagoniſt to a new trial of ſkill. — For a more minute account of this ſingular piece of criticiſm, I muſt refer the reader to the notes on Corinna, in the Fragmenta Poetriarum, by Wolfius. Time has left us only a few diminutive ſcraps of Corinna's Poetry; but Plutarch, in his Treatiſe on the Glory of the Athenians, has preſerved one of her critical Bon-mots, which may deſerve to be repeated. That author aſſerts, that Corinna inſtructed Pindar in his youth, and adviſed him to adorn his compoſition with the embelliſhments of fable. The obedient Poet ſoon brought her ſome verſes, in which he had followed her advice rather too freely; when his Tutreſs, ſmiling at his profuſion, τη χειρι δειν εφη σπειρειν, αλλα μη ολω τω θυλακω.

NOTE IV. Verse 126.

Yet may not Judgment, with ſevere diſdain,
Slight the young Rhodian's variegated ſtrain.] Apollonius, ſurnamed the Rhodian from the place of his reſidence, is ſuppoſed to have been a native of Alexandria; where he is ſaid to have recited ſome portion of his Poem, while he was yet a youth. Finding it ill received by his countrymen, he retired to Rhodes, where he is conjectured to have poliſhed and completed his Work, ſupporting himſelf by the profeſſion of Rhetoric, and receiving from the Rhodians the freedom of their city. He at length returned, with conſiderable honour, to the place of his birth, ſucceeding Eratoſthenes in the care of the Alexandrian Library, in the reign of Ptolemy Euergetes, who aſcended the throne of Egypt in the year before Chriſt 246. That prince had been

educated by the famous Ariſtarchus, and rivalled the preceding ſovereigns of his liberal family in the munificent encouragement of learning. Apollonius was a diſciple of the poet Callimachus; but their connection ended in the moſt violent enmity, which was probably owing to ſome degree of contempt expreſſed by Apollonius for the light compoſitions of his maſter. The learned have vainly endeavoured to diſcover the particulars of their quarrel. — The only Work of Apollonius which has deſcended to modern times, is his Poem, in four Books, on the Argonautic expedition. Both Longinus and Quintilian have aſſigned to this Work the mortifying character of Mediocrity; but there lies an appeal from the ſentence of the moſt candid and enlightened Critics to the voice of Nature; and the merit of Apollonius has little to apprehend from the deciſion of this ultimate judge. His Poem abounds in animated deſcription, and in paſſages of the moſt tender and pathetic beauty. How finely painted is the firſt ſetting forth of the Argo! and how beautifully is the wife of Chiron introduced, holding up the little Achilles in her arms, and ſhewing him to his father Peleus as he ſailed along the ſhore! But the chief excellence in our Poet, is the ſpirit and delicacy with which he has delineated the paſſion of love in his Medea. That Virgil thought very highly of his merit in this particular is ſufficiently evident from the minute exactneſs with which he has copied many tender touches of the Grecian Poet. Thoſe who compare the third Book of Apollonius with the fourth of Virgil, may, I think, perceive not only that Dido has ſome features of Medea, but that the two Bards, however different in their reputation, reſembled each other in their genius; and that they both excel in delicacy and pathos.

NOTE V. VERSE 190.

Virgil ſinks loaded with their heavy praiſe.] Scaliger appears to be the moſt extravagant of all the Critics who have laviſhed their undiſtinguiſhing encomiums on Virgil, by aſſerting that he alone is entitled to the name of Poet. Poetices, lib. iii. c. 2. — Though the opinion of Spence, and other modern Critics, concerning the character of Æneas, conſidered as an allegorical portrait of Auguſtus, ſeems to gain ground, yet it might perhaps be eaſy to overturn the ingenious conjectures and

and the fanciful reaſoning by which that idea has been ſupported. This attempt would have the ſanction of one of the moſt judicious Commentators of Virgil; for the learned Heyne expreſsly rejects all allegorical interpretation, and thinks it improbable that a Poet of ſo correct a judgment could have adopted a plan which muſt neceſſarily contract and cramp his powers. He even ventures to aſſert, that if the character of Æneas was delineated as an allegorical portrait of Auguſtus, the execution of it is unhappy. The ſtrongeſt argument which has been adduced to ſupport this conjecture, is founded on the ingenious interpretation of the following paſſage in the opening of the third Georgic:

> Primus ego in patriam mecum, modo vita ſuperſit,
> Aonio rediens deducam vertice Muſas:
> Primus Idumæas referam tibi, Mantua, palmas;
> Et viridi in campo templum de marmore ponam
> Propter aquam, tardis ingens ubi flexibus errat
> Mincius, et tenerâ prætexit arundine ripas.
> In medio mihi Cæſar erit, templumque tenebit, &c.

These lines, in which Virgil expreſſes his intention of dedicating a temple to Auguſtus, have been conſidered as the *nobleſt allegory of ancient Poetry* *; and the great Critic who firſt ſtarted the idea, has expatiated, in the triumph of his diſcovery, on the *myſterious* beauties they contain: but the whole of this hypotheſis is unfortunately built upon the rejection of three verſes, which are pronounced unworthy of the Poet, and which, though found in every MS. the Critic claims a right of removing. A licence ſo extraordinary cannot even be juſtified by the talents of this accompliſhed writer; for if the leſs elegant paſſages of the ancient Poets might be removed at pleaſure, their compoſitions would be expoſed to the caprice of every fantaſtic commentator. The obvious and literal interpretation not only renders this violence unneceſſary, but is more agreeable to the judgment of the Poet and the man-

* Hurd's Horace, vol. ii. page 44.

ners of his age. The custom of erecting real temples was so familiar to antiquity, that a Roman would never have suspected the edifice was to be raised only with poetical materials. We may even conjecture, from a line of Statius, that the Poet himself had a temple erected to his memory; and, without any breach of probability, we may admit his intention of giving his living Emperor such a testimony of his gratitude. This adulation, though shocking to us, was too generally justified by example to oblige the Poet to palliate it by a fiction. He had before acquiesced in the divinity of his Imperial Patron, and had expressed the idea in its full sense.

Namque erit ille mihi semper *Deus*, illius aram
Sæpe tener nostris ab ovilibus imbuet agnus.
Eclog. I.

Ingredere et votis jam *nunc* assuesce vocari.
Georg. I.

Having made such an invocation in the beginning of his Work, was his *delicacy* afterwards to be shocked, and oblige him to pay a compliment under the disguise of an obscure conceit? for that allegory must be allowed to be obscure, which had remained through so many ages unexplained. The unfortunate rejected lines, for whose elegance we do not contend, may at least be rescued from impropriety by a literal interpretation of the preceding passage; for, dismiss the conjectured allegory, and the chief objections against them remain no longer. If the phraseology be peculiar, it is at least supported by concurring MSS. The adjective *ardens* is sometimes undoubtedly joined to a word that does not denote a substance of heat or flame, as the Critic himself admits in the case of *ardentes hostes*, to which we may add the *verbum ardens* of Cicero. As to the line which is said to contain the most glaring note of illegitimacy,

Tithoni primâ quot abest ab origine Cæsar,

many reasons might induce the Poet to use the name of Tithonus, which at this distance of time it is not easy for us to conjecture. Per-

haps he chose it to vary the expression of *Assaraci Proles*, which he had adopted in the preceding lines. The absurdity of the subject-matter, and the place in which it is introduced, that are insisted on as the principal objections, arise solely from the allegorical hypothesis: without it the construction will be plain and natural. The Poet expresses his intention of erecting a temple to Augustus, and expatiates on the magnificence with which it was to be adorned: he then returns to his present poetical subject;

> *Interea* Dryadum sylvas saltusque sequamur:

and, having dwelt a little on that, to avoid too long a digression, very naturally resumes the praises of the Emperor, by alluding to the sublimer song which he intended to devote to him *hereafter*.

> *Mox* tamen ardentes accingar dicere pugnas
> Cæsaris. ———

Perhaps the important position that gave rise to this conjecture, and to others of a similar complexion, "that the propriety of allegorical composition made the distinguished pride of ancient poetry," is as questionable as the conjecture itself; and a diligent and judicious perusal of the ancient Poets might convince us, that simplicity was their genuine character, and that many of their allegorical beauties have originated in the fertile imagination of their commentators. Aristarchus, indeed, the celebrated model of ancient criticism, rejected with great spirit the allegorical interpretations of Homer, as we are informed by Eusthathius; but the good Archbishop of Thessalonica, who, like some modern prelates, had a passion for allegory, censures the great Critic of Alexandria for his more simple mode of construction, and supposes it an injury to the refined beauties and profound wisdom of the Poet. Ἀρισταρχος μεντοι μηδεν τι των Ὁμηρου . . . αλληγορειν αξιων, ου μονον υπερβολικον τι λεγει αλλα και σοφιας μεγαλης αφαιρειται τον ποιητην. EUSTH. vol. iii. page 1300.

NOTE VI. VERSE 260.

Shall History's pen, to aid his vengeance won.] There is hardly any eminent personage of antiquity who has suffered more from detraction, both

in his literary and moral character, than the poet Lucan. His fate, indeed, ſeems in all points to have been peculiarly ſevere. His early death, at an age when few Poets have even laid the foundation of their capital work, is itſelf ſufficient to excite our compaſſion and regret; but to periſh by the envious tyranny of Nero, may be conſidered as a bleſſing, when compared with the more cruel misfortune of being branded with infamy in the immortal pages of Tacitus. As I am perſuaded that the great Hiſtorian has inadvertently adopted the groſſeſt calumny againſt our Poet, I ſhall moſt readily aſſign my reaſons for thinking ſo. It may firſt be proper to give a ſhort ſketch of Lucan's life.—He was the ſon of Anneus Mela, the youngeſt brother of Seneca; and though born at Corduba, was conveyed to Rome at the age of eight months: a circumſtance, as his more indulgent critics obſerve, which ſufficiently refutes the cenſure of thoſe who conſider his language as provincial. At Rome he was educated under the Stoic Cornutus, ſo warmly celebrated by his diſciple Perſius the Satiriſt, who was the intimate friend of our Poet. In the cloſe of his education Lucan is ſaid to have paſſed ſome time at Athens. On his return to Rome he roſe to the office of Quæſtor, before he had attained the legal age. He was afterwards inrolled among the Augurs; and married a lady of noble birth, of whoſe amiable character I ſhall ſpeak more at large in a ſubſequent note. Lucan had for ſome time been admitted to familiarity with Nero, when the Emperor choſe to contend for poetical honours by the public recital of a poem he had compoſed on Niobe; and ſome verſes of this imperial production are ſuppoſed to be preſerved in the firſt Satire of Perſius. Lucan had the hardineſs to repeat a poem on Orpheus, in competition with that of Nero; and, what is more remarkable, the judges of the conteſt were juſt and bold enough to decide againſt the Emperor. From hence Nero became the perſecutor of his ſucceſsful rival, and forbade him to produce any poetry in public. The well-known conſpiracy of Piſo againſt the tyrant ſoon followed; and Tacitus, with his uſual ſarcaſtic ſeverity, concludes that Lucan engaged in the enterprize from the poetical injuries he had received: a remark which does little credit to the candour of the Hiſtorian; who might have found a much nobler, and, I will add, a more probable motive for his conduct, in the generous ardor of his character, and his paſſionate adora-

 tion

tion of freedom. In the ſequel of his narration, Tacitus alledges a charge againſt our Poet, which, if it were true, muſt lead us to deteſt him as the moſt abject of mankind. The Hiſtorian aſſerts, that Lucan, when accuſed of the conſpiracy, for ſome time denied the charge; but, corrupted at laſt by a promiſe of impunity, and deſirous to atone for the tardineſs of his confeſſion, accuſed his mother Atilla as his accomplice. This circumſtance is ſo improbable in itſelf, and ſo little conformable to the general character of Lucan, that ſome writers have treated it with contempt, as a calumny invented by Nero to vilify the object of his envious abhorrence. But the name of Tacitus has given ſuch an air of authority to the ſtory, that it may ſeem to deſerve a more ſerious diſcuſſion, particularly as there are two ſubſequent events related by the ſame Hiſtorian, which have a tendency to invalidate the accuſation ſo injurious to our Poet. The events I mean are, the fate of Annæus, and the eſcape of Atilla, the two parents of Lucan. The former died in conſequence of an accuſation brought againſt him, after the death of his ſon, by Fabius Romanus, who had been intimate with Lucan and forged ſome letters in his name, with the deſign of proving his father concerned in the conſpiracy. Theſe letters were produced to Nero, who ſent them to Annæus, from an eager deſire, ſays Tacitus, to get poſſeſſion of his wealth. From this fact two inferences may be drawn, according to the different lights in which it may be conſidered:—If the accuſation againſt Annæus was juſt, it is clear that Lucan had not betrayed his father, and he appears the leſs likely to have endangered by his confeſſion the life of a parent, to whom he owed a ſtill tenderer regard:—If Annæus was not involved in the conſpiracy, and merely put to death by Nero for the ſake of his treaſure, we may the more readily believe, that the tyrant who murdered the father from avarice, might calumniate the ſon from envy. But the eſcape of Atilla affords us the ſtrongeſt reaſon to conclude that Lucan was perfectly innocent of the abject and unnatural treachery, of which Tacitus has ſuppoſed him guilty. Had the Poet really named his mother as his accomplice, would the vindictive and ſanguinary Nero have ſpared the life of a woman, whoſe family he deteſted, particularly when other females were put to death for their ſhare in the conſpiracy? That Atilla was not in that number, the Hiſtorian himſelf informs us in the following remarkable ſentence,

Atilla

Atilla mater Annæi Lucani, ſine abſolutione, ſine ſupplicio, diſſimulata; thus tranſlated by Gordon: "The information againſt Atilla, the mother of Lucan, was diſſembled; and, without being cleared, ſhe eſcaped unpuniſhed."

The preceding remarks will, I hope, vindicate to every candid mind the honour of our Poet; whoſe firmneſs and intrepidity of character are indeed very forcibly diſplayed in that picture of his death which Tacitus himſelf has given us. I ſhall preſent it to the Engliſh reader in the words of Gordon: — Lucan, "while his blood iſſued in ſtreams, perceiving his feet and hands to grow cold and ſtiffen, and life to retire by little and little to the extremities, while his heart was ſtill beating with vital warmth, and his faculties no wiſe impaired, recollected ſome lines of his own, which deſcribed a wounded ſoldier expiring in a manner that reſembled this. The lines themſelves he rehearſed; and they were the laſt words he ever uttered." The Annals of Tacitus, Book xv. — The critics differ concerning the verſes of the Pharſalia which the author quoted in ſo memorable a manner. I ſhall tranſcribe the two paſſages he is ſuppoſed to have repeated, and only add that Lipſius contends for the latter.

Sanguis erant lacrymæ: quæcunque foramina novit
Humor, ab his largus manat cruor: ora redundant,
Et patulæ nares: ſudor rubet: omnia plenis
Membra fluunt venis: totum eſt pro vulnere corpus.

Lib. ix. 814.

Now the warm blood at once, from every part,
Ran purple poiſon down, and drain'd the fainting heart.
Blood falls for tears; and o'er his mournful face
The ruddy drops their tainted paſſage trace.
Where'er the liquid juices find a way,
There ſtreams of blood, there crimſon rivers ſtray.
His mouth and guſhing noſtrils pour a flood,
And e'en the pores ouze out the trickling blood;
In the red deluge all the parts lie drown'd,
And the whole body ſeems one bleeding wound.

ROWE.

Scinditur avulſus; nec ſicut vulnere ſanguis
Emicuit lentus; ruptis cadit undique venis,
Diſcurſuſque animæ, diverſa in membra meantis,
Interceptus aquis.

Lib. iii. v. 638.

No ſingle wound the gaping rupture ſeems,
Where trickling crimſon wells in ſlender ſtreams;
But, from an op'ning horrible and wide,
A thouſand veſſels pour the burſting tide:
At once the winding channel's courſe was broke,
Where wand'ring life her mazy journey took;
At once the currents all forgot their way,
And loſt their purple in the azure ſea.

Rowe.

Such was the death of Lucan, before he had completed his twenty-ſeventh year. If his character as a man has been injured by the Hiſtorian, his poetical reputation has been treated not leſs injuriouſly by the Critics. Quintilian, by a frivolous diſtinction, diſputes his title to be claſſed among the Poets; and Scaliger ſays, with a brutality of language diſgraceful only to himſelf, that he ſeems rather to *bark* than to *ſing*. But theſe inſults may appear amply compenſated, when we remember, that in the moſt poliſhed nations of modern Europe the moſt elevated and poetic ſpirits have been his warmeſt admirers; that in France he was idolized by Corneille, and in England tranſlated by Rowe.—The ſevereſt cenſures on Lucan have proceeded from thoſe who have unfairly compared his language to that of Virgil: but how unjuſt and abſurd is ſuch a compariſon! it is comparing an uneven block of porphyry, taken rough from the quarry, to the moſt beautiful ſuperficies of poliſhed marble. How differently ſhould we think of Virgil as a poet, if we poſſeſſed only the verſes which he wrote at that period of life when Lucan compoſed his Pharſalia! In the diſpoſition of his ſubject, in the propriety and elegance of diction, he is undoubtedly far inferior to Virgil: but if we attend to the bold originality of his deſign, and to the vigour of his ſentiments; if we conſider the Pharſalia as the

rapid

rapid and uncorrected ſketch of a young poet, executed in an age when the ſpirit of his countrymen was broken, and their taſte in literature corrupted, it may juſtly be eſteemed as one of the moſt noble and moſt wonderful productions of the human mind.

NOTE VII. VERSE 293.

As Leſbos paid to Pompey's lovely Wife.] Pompey, after his defeat at Pharſalia, proceeded to Leſbos, as he had left his wife Cornelia to the protection of that iſland; which received the unfortunate hero with a ſublime generoſity. The Leſbians entreated him to remain amongſt them, and promiſed to defend him. Pompey expreſſed his gratitude for their fidelity, but declined the offer, and embarked with Cornelia. The concern of this gallant people on the departure of their amiable gueſt is thus deſcribed by Lucan:

——— dixit; mœſtamque carinæ
Impoſuit comitem. Cunctos mutare putares
Tellurem patriæque ſolum: ſic litore toto
Plangitur, infeſtæ tenduntur in æthera dextræ;
Pompeiumque minus, cujus fortuna dolorem
Moverat, aſt illam, quam toto tempore belli
Ut civem videre ſuam, diſcedere cernens
Ingemuit populus; quam vix, ſi caſtra mariti
Victoris peteret, ſiccis dimittere matres
Jam poterant oculis: tanto devinxit amore
Hos pudor, hos probitas, caſtique modeſtia vultus.

Lib. viii. v. 146.

He ceas'd; and to the ſhip his partner bore,
While loud complainings fill the ſounding ſhore;
It ſeem'd as if the nation with her paſs'd,
And baniſhment had laid their iſland waſte.
Their ſecond ſorrows they to Pompey give;
For her as for their citizen they grieve:
E'en though glad victory had call'd her thence,
And her Lord's bidding been the juſt pretence,

The

The Lesbian matrons had in tears been drown'd,
And brought her weeping to their wat'ry bound:
So was she lov'd, so winning was her grace,
Such lowly sweetness dwelt upon her face. ROWE.

NOTE VIII. VERSE 296.

Let Argentaria on your canvass shine.] Polla Argentaria was the daughter of a Roman Senator, and the wife of Lucan. She is said to have transcribed and corrected the three first books of the Pharsalia, after the death of her husband. It is much to be regretted that we possess not the poem which he wrote on the merits of this amiable and accomplished woman; but her name is immortalized by two surviving Poets of that age. The veneration which she paid to the memory of her husband, is recorded by Martial; and more poetically described in that pleasing and elegant little production of Statius, *Genethliacon Lucani*, a poem which I the more readily commend, as I may be thought by some readers unjust towards its author, in omitting to celebrate his Thebaid. I confess, indeed, the miscellaneous poems of Statius appear to me his most valuable work: in most of these there is much imagination and sentiment, in harmonious and spirited verse. The little poem which I have mentioned, on the anniversary of Lucan's birth, is said to have been written at the request of Argentaria. The Author, after invoking the poetical deities to attend the ceremony, touches with great delicacy and spirit on the compositions of Lucan's childhood, which are lost, and the Pharsalia, the production of his early youth; he then pays a short compliment to the beauty and talents of Argentaria, laments the cruel fate which deprived her so immaturely of domestic happiness; and concludes with the following address to the shade of Lucan:

At tu, seu rapidum poli per axem
Famæ curribus arduis levatus,
Qua surgunt animæ potentiores,
Terras despicis, et sepulchra rides:
Seu pacis meritum nemus reclusæ
Felix Elysiis tenes in oris,
Quo Pharsalica turba congregatur;

Et

Et te nobile carmen inſonantem
Pompeii comitantur et Catones:
Tu magna ſacer et ſuperbus umbra
Neſcis Tartaron, et procul nocentum
Audis verbera, pallidumque viſa
Matris lampade reſpicis Neronem.
Adſis lucidus; et vocante Polla
Unum, quæſo, diem deos ſilentum
Exores; ſolet hoc patere limen
Ad nuptas redeuntibus maritis.
Hæc te non thiaſis procax doloſis
Falſi numinis induit figuras;
Ipſum ſed colit, et frequentat ipſum
Imis altius inſitum medullis;
Ac ſolatia vana ſubminiſtrat
Vultus, qui ſimili notatus auro
Stratis prænitet, excubatque ſomno
Securæ. Procul hinc abite mortes;
Hæc vitæ genitalis eſt origo;
Cedat luctus atrox, geniſque manent
Jam dulces lacrymæ, dolorque feſtus
Quicquid fleverat ante nunc adoret.

But you, O! whether to the ſkies
On Fame's triumphant car you riſe,
(Where mightier ſouls new life aſſume)
And mock the confines of the tomb;
Or whether in Elyſium bleſt
You grace the groves of ſacred reſt,
Where the Pharſalian heroes dwell;
And, as you ſtrike your Epic ſhell,
The Pompeys and the Catos throng
To catch the animating ſong;
Of Tartarus the dread controul
Binds not your high and hallow'd ſoul;

Diſtant you hear that wailing coaſt,
And ſee the guilty Nero's ghoſt
Grow pale with anguiſh and affright,
His mother flaſhing on his ſight.
Be preſent to your Polla's vows,
While to your honour'd name ſhe bows!
One day let your intreaties gain
From thoſe who rule the ſhadowy train!
Their gates have op'd to bleſs a wife,
And given a huſband back to life.
In you the tender Fair invites
No fancied god with frantic rites;
You are the object of her prayers,
You in her inmoſt heart ſhe bears:
And, ſtampt on mimic gold, your head
Adorns the faithful mourner's bed,
And ſooths her eyes before they cloſe,
The guardian of her chaſte repoſe.
Away with all funereal ſtate!
From hence his nobler life we date:
Let Mourning change the pang ſevere
To fond Devotion's grateful tear!
And feſtal grief, its anguiſh o'er,
What it lamented, now adore!

I cannot cloſe this note without obſerving, that the preceding verſes have a ſtrong tendency to prove, that Lucan was perfectly innocent in regard to the accuſation which I have examined before. Had he been really guilty of baſely endangering the life of his mother, it is not probable that his wife would have honoured his memory with ſuch enthuſiaſtic veneration, or that Statius, in verſes deſigned to do him honour, would have alluded to *the mother* of Nero. The Reader will pardon my recurring to this ſubject, as it is pleaſing to make uſe of every argument which may remove ſo odious and unjuſt a ſtain from a manly and exalted character.

NOTES

TO THE

THIRD EPISTLE.

NOTE I. VERSE 36.

AND *ſmiles of triumph hid his mortal pang.*] An alluſion to *ridens moriar*, the cloſe of the celebrated Northern Ode, by the Daniſh king Regner Lodbrog; a tranſlation of which is inſerted in the curious little volume of Runic poetry, printed for Dodſley, 1763.

Bartholin, in his admirable Eſſay on the Cauſes which inſpired the Danes with a Contempt of Death, affirms, that it was cuſtomary with the Northern warriors to ſing their own exploits in the cloſe of life. He mentions the example of a hero, named Hallmundus, who being mortally wounded, commanded his daughter to attend while he compoſed a poem, and to inſcribe it on a tablet of wood. BARTHOLIN. Lib. i. cap. 10.

NOTE II. VERSE 60.

And galls the ghoſtly Tyrant with her laſh.] The poetry of Provence contains many ſpirited ſatires againſt the enormities of the Clergy. The moſt remarkable, is the bold invective of the Troubadour Guillaume Figueira, in which he execrates the avarice and the cruelty of Rome. The Papal cauſe found a female Poet to defend it: Germonda of Montpellier compoſed a poetical reply to the ſatire of Figueira. See MILLOT's Hiſt. des Troubadours, vol. ii. p. 455.

NOTE III. VERSE 76.

Struck with ill-fated zeal the Latian lyre.] There never was a century utterly deſtitute of ingenious and elegant Poets, ſays the learned Polycarp Leyſer, after having patiently traced the obſcure progreſs of Latin poetry through all the dark ages. Indeed the merit of ſome Latin Poets, in a period that we commonly ſuppoſe involved in the groſſeſt barbariſm, is ſingularly ſtriking; many of theſe are of the Epic kind, and, as they deſcribe the manners and cuſtoms of their reſpective times, a complete review of them might form a curious and entertaining work. I ſhall briefly mention ſuch as appear moſt worthy of notice.

Abbo, a Pariſian monk, of the Benedictine order, wrote a poem on the ſiege of Paris by the Normans and the Danes, at which he was preſent, in the year 886: it is printed in the ſecond volume of Ducheſne's Script. Francorum; and, though it has little or no poetical merit, may be regarded as an hiſtorical curioſity. The following lines, addreſſed to the city of Paris, in the beginning of the work, may ſerve as a ſpecimen of its language:

Dic igitur præpulchra polis, quod Danea munus
Libavit tibimet, ſoboles Plutonis amica,
Tempore quo præſul domini et dulciſſimus heros
Gozlinus temet paſtorque benignus alebat!
Hæc inquit, miror, narrare poteſt aliquiſne?
Nonne tuis idem vidiſti oculis? refer ergo:
Vidi equidem, juſſiſque tuis parebo libenter.

Leyſer has confounded this Poet with another of this name; but Fabricius has corrected the miſtake, in his Bibliotheca Latina mediæ et infimæ Ætatis.

Guido, Biſhop of Amiens from the year 1058 to 1076, wrote an Heroic poem on the exploits of William the Conqueror, in which, according to Ordericus Vitalis, he imitated both Virgil and Statius. William of Apulia compoſed, at the requeſt of Pope Urban the IId, a poem, in five books, on the actions of the Normans in Sicily, Apulia, and Calabria, to the death of Robert Guiſcard their prince; addreſſing his

his work to the ſon of that hero. It was written between the years 1080 and 1099; firſt printed in 1582, 4to; and again in Muratori's Script. Ital. Du Cange, in his Notes to the Alexiad of the Princeſs Anna Comnena, has illuſtrated that hiſtory by frequent and long quotations from William of Apulia; but though the learned Critic gives him the title of Scriptor Egregius, his poetry appears to me but a few degrees ſuperior to that of the Monk Abbo, whom I have juſt mentioned. The Reader may judge from the following paſſage, which I ſelect not only as a ſpecimen of the Author's ſtyle, but as it ſhews that the wives of theſe martial Princes ſhared with them in all the perils of war.

> Uxor in hoc bello Roberti forte ſagitta
> Quadam læſa fuit, quæ vulnere territa, nullam
> Dum ſperabat opem, ſe pene ſubegerat hoſti,
> Navigio cujus ſe commendare volebat,
> Inſtantis metuens vicina pericula lethi:
> Hanc deus eripuit, fieri ludibria nolens
> Matronæ tantæ tam nobilis et venerandæ.

The Princeſs Comnena has alſo celebrated the fortitude which this Heroine, whoſe name was Gaita, diſplayed in the battle; and it is remarkable, that the royal female Hiſtorian deſcribes the noble Amazon more poetically than the Latin Poet.

Gualfredo, an Italian, who ſucceeded to the biſhoprick of Siena in the year 1080, and died in 1127, wrote an Heroic poem on the expedition of Godfrey of Boulogne, which is ſaid to be ſtill preſerved in MS. at Siena. I believe Gualfredo is the firſt Poet, in point of time, who treated of the happy ſubject of the Cruſades; which was afterwards embelliſhed by two very elegant writers of Latin verſe, Iſcanus and Gunther, of whom I ſhall preſently ſpeak, and at length received its higheſt honour from the genius of Taſſo. There is alſo an early Latin poem on this ſubject, the joint production of two writers, named Fulco and Ægidius, whom the accurate Fabricius places in the beginning of the 13th century; the title of the work is Hiſtoria Geſtorum Viæ noſtri Temporis Hieroſolymitanæ. It is printed in the fourth volume of Ducheſne's Script. Franc. and with conſiderable additions in the third volume of

Anecdota

Anecdota Edmundi Martene. I tranſcribe part of the opening of this poem, as the curious reader may have a pleaſure in comparing it with that of Taſſo.

Ardor ineſt, inquam, ſententia fixaque menti
Verſibus et numeris tranſmittere poſteritati
Qualiter inſtinctu deitatis, et auſpice cultu
Eſt aggreſſa via memorando nobilis actu,
Qua ſacroſancti violantes jura ſepulchri
Digna receperunt meriti commercia pravi.
Inque ſuis Francis antiqua reſurgere Troja
Cœpit, et edomuit Chriſto contraria regna.

I will only add the portrait of Godfrey:

Inclytus ille ducum Godefridus culmen honoſque,
Omnibus exemplum bonitatis militiæque,
Sive haſta jaculans æquaret Parthica tela,
Cominus aut feriens terebraret ferrea ſcuta,
Seu gladio pugnans carnes reſecaret et oſſa,
Sive eques atque pedes propelleret agmina denſa,
Hic inimicitiis cunctis ſibi conciliatis
Cunctis poſſeſſis pro Chriſti pace relictis
Arripuit callem Chriſtum ſectando vocantem.

The poem cloſes with the capture of Jeruſalem.

Laurentius of Verona, who flouriſhed about the year 1120, wrote an Heroic poem, in ſeven books, entitled, Rerum in Majorica Piſanorum. Edidit Ughellus, tom. 3. Italiæ ſacræ.

But in merit and reputation, theſe early Latin Poets of modern time are very far inferior to Philip Gualtier de Chatillon, who ſeems to have been the firſt that caught any portion of true poetic ſpirit in Latin verſe. He was Provoſt of the Canons of Tournay * about the year 1200, according to Mr. Warton, who has given ſome ſpecimens of his ſtyle in the ſecond Diſſertation prefixed to his admirable Hiſtory of Engliſh Poetry. I ſhall therefore only add, that the beſt edition of his Alexandreid, an Heroic

* Fabricius calls him Epiſcopus Magalonenſis. Bib. Lat. tom. ii. p. 255.

poem in ten books on Alexander the Great, was printed at Leyden, 4to, 1558.

The ſuperior merit of Joſephus Iſcanus, or Joſeph of Exeter, has been alſo diſplayed by the ſame judicious Encomiaſt, in the Diſſertation I have mentioned; nor has he failed to commemorate two Latin Epic Poets of the ſame period, and of conſiderable merit for the time in which they lived—Gunther, and William of Bretagny; the firſt was a German monk, who wrote after the year 1108, and has left various hiſtorical and poetical works; particularly two of the Epic kind—Solymarium, a poem on the taking of Jeruſalem by Godfrey of Bulloign; and another, entitled Ligurinus, on the exploits of the Emperor Frederick Barbaroſſa, which he completed during the life of that Prince. The firſt was never printed; of the latter there have been ſeveral editions, and one by the celebrated Melancthon, in 1569. That his poetical merit was conſiderable in many reſpects, will appear from the following verſes, in which he ſpeaks of himſelf.

Hoc quoque me famæ, ſi deſint cætera, ſolum
Conciliare poteſt, quod jam per multa latentes
Sæcula, nec clauſis prodire penatibus auſas
Pierides vulgare paro, priſcumque nitorem
Reddere carminibus, tardoſque citare poetas.

William of Bretagny was preceptor to Pierre Charlot, natural ſon of Philip Auguſtus, King of France, and addreſſed a poem to his pupil, entitled Karlotis, which is yet unpubliſhed; but his greater work, called Philippis, an Heroic poem in twelve books, is printed in the collections of Ducheſne and Pithæus; and in a ſeparate 4to volume, with a copious commentary by Barthius. Notwithſtanding the praiſes beſtowed on this Author by his learned Commentator, who prefers him to all his contemporaries, he appears to me inferior in poetic ſpirit to his three rivals, Gualtier de Chatillon, Iſcanus, and Gunther. Yet his work is by no means deſpicable in its ſtyle, and may be conſidered as a valuable picture of the times in which he lived; for he was himſelf engaged in many of the ſcenes which he deſcribes. His profeſt deſign is to celebrate the exploits of Philip Auguſtus; and he cloſes his poem with the death

death of that Monarch, which happened in 1223. He addresses his work, in two separate poetical dedications, to Lewis, the successor of Philip, and to Pierre Charlot his natural son, who was Bishop of Noyon in 1240, and died 1249. He seems to have been excited to this composition by the reputation of Gualtier's Alexandreid; to which he thus alludes, in the verses addressed to Lewis:

Gesta ducis Macedum celebri describere versu
Si licuit Gualtere tibi, quæ sola relatu
Multivago docuit te vociferatio famæ.

— — — — —

Cur ego quæ novi, proprio quæ lumine vidi,
Non ausim magni magnalia scribere regis,
Qui nec Alexandro minor est virtute, nec illo
Urbi Romuleæ totum qui subdidit orbem?

He takes occasion also, in two other parts of his poem, to pay a liberal compliment to Gualtier, to whom, in poetical ability, he confesses himself inferior; but this inferiority his admirer Barthius will not allow. Of their respective talents the reader may judge, who will compare the passage which Mr. Warton has cited from the Alexandreid, with the following lines, in which William of Bretagny uses the very simile of his predecessor, comparing his hero Philip to a young lion.

Rex dolet ereptum comitem sibi, frendit, et iræ
Occultare nequit tectos sub pectore motus,
Nam rubor in vultu duplicatus prodit aperte
Quam gravis illustrem trahit indignatio mentem.
Qualiter in Lybicis spumante leunculo rictu
Saltibus ungue ferox, et dentibus asper aduncis
Fortis et horrisonis anno jam pene secundo,
Cui venatoris venabula forte per armos
Descendere levi stringentia vulnere corpus,
Colla rigens hirsuta jubis desævit in hostem
Jam retrocedentem, nec eum tetigisse volentem,
Cum nihil ex facto referat nisi dedecus illo.

Nec mora nec requies, quin jam deglutiat ipſum,
Ni prudens hoſtis prætenta cuſpide ſcuto
Unguibus objecto, dum dat veſtigia retro,
In loca ſe retrahat non irrumpenda leoni.
Sic puer in comitem rex debacchatur et ipſum
Subſequitur preſſo relegens veſtigia greſſu.

I will add the following paſſage from the eleventh Book, as it contains an animated portrait, and a ſimile more original than the preceding.

At lævo in cornu, qui nulli marte ſecundus,
Bolonides pugnæ inſiſtit, cui fraxinus ingens
Nunc implet dextram, vix ulli bajula, qualem
In Bacchi legimus portaſſe Capanea cunas,
Quam vix fulmineo dejecit Jupiter ictu:
Nunc culter vitæ impatiens, nunc ſanguine pugni
Mucro rubens; gemina e ſublimi vertice fulgens
Cornua conus agit, ſuperaſque eduxit in auras
E coſtis aſſumpta nigris, quas faucis in antro
Branchia balenæ Britici colit incola ponti;
Ut qui magnus erat magnæ ſuperaddita moli
Majorem faceret phantaſtica pompa videri.
Ac velut in ſaltus ſcopuloſa Bieria ſaltu
Præcipiti mittit ingenti corpore cervum,
Cujus multifidos numerant a cornibus annos,
Menſe ſub Octobri nondum Septembre peracto,
Annua quando novis Venus incitat ignibus illum,
Curſitat in cervos ramoſa fronte minores,
Omnibus ut pulſis victor ſub tegmine fagi
Connubio cervam ſolus ſibi ſubdat amatam.
Haud ſecus e peditum medio, quibus ipſe rotundo
Ut caſtro cauta ſe circumſepſerat arte,
Proſiliens volat in Thomam, Robertigenaſque
Drocarum Comitem, Belvacenumque Philippum
Bolonides.——

William of Bretagny had an immediate ſucceſſor in Latin poetry, who appears to have at leaſt an equal portion of poetical ſpirit; the name of this Author is Nicholas de Brai, who wrote an Heroic poem on the actions of Louis the VIIIth, after the death of that Monarch, and addreſſed it to William of Auvergne, who was Biſhop of Paris from the year 1228 to 1248. As a ſpecimen of his deſcriptive power, I ſelect the following lines, which form part of a long deſcription of a Goblet preſented to the King on his acceſſion:

——— Parant intrare palatia regis
Magnifici cives, gratiſſima dona ferentes,
Tegmina quos ornant variis inſculpta figuris;
Et patrem patriæ jucunda voce ſalutant,
Et genibus flexis præſentant ditia dona.

— — — — —

Offertur crater, quem ſi ſit credere dignum
Perditus ingenio fabricavit Mulciber auro;
Margine crateris totus depingitur orbis,
Et ſeries rerum brevibus diſtincta figuris:
Illic pontus erat, tellus et pendulus aer,
Ignis ad alta volans cœli ſupereminet illis:
Quatuor in partes orbis diſtinguitur, ingens
Circuit oceanus immenſis fluctibus orbem.
Ingenio natura ſuo duo lumina fecit
Fixa tenore poli, mundi famulantia rebus.

The Author proceeds to deſcribe Thebes and Troy, as they are figured on this ſuperb Goblet; and concludes his account of the workmanſhip with the four following lines, of peculiar beauty for the age in which they appeared:

Martis adulterium reſupino margine pinxit
Mulciber, et Venerem laqueis cum Marte ligavit;
Pluraque cælaſſet ſub margine, ſed pudor illi
Obſtat, et ingentis renovatur cauſa doloris.

This

This Poem, which the author seems to have left imperfect, is printed in the fifth volume of Duchesne's Script. Francorum.—England is said to have produced another Heroic Poet of considerable merit, who celebrated in Latin verse the exploits of Richard the First, and who was called Gulielmus Peregrinus, from his having attended that Prince to the Holy Land. Leland mentions him by the name of Gulielmus de Canno, and Pits calls him Poetarum sui temporis apud nostrates facile Princeps; but I do not find that his Work was ever printed; nor do the several biographical writers who speak of him, inform us where it exists in MS.

In Italy the Latin language is supposed to have been cultivated with still greater success, and the restoration of its purity is in great measure ascribed to Albertino Mussato, whose merits were first displayed to our country, by the learned author of the Essay on Pope.—Mussato was a Paduan, of high rank and great talents, but unfortunate. He died in exile, 1329, and left, besides many smaller Latin pieces, an Heroic Poem, De Gestis Italorum post Henricum VII. Cæsarem, seu de Obsidione Domini Canis Grandis de Verona circa mænia Paduanæ civitatis et Conflictu ejus. — Quadrio, from whom I transcribe this title, says it is printed in the tenth volume of Muratori. Vossius, who speaks of him as an Historian, asserts that he commanded in the war which is the subject of his Poem.

In a few years after the death of Mussato, Petrarch received the laurel at Rome, for his Latin Epic poem, entitled Africa; a performance which has sunk so remarkably from the high reputation it once obtained, that the great admirer and encomiast of Petrarch, who has published three entertaining quarto volumes on his life, calls it "Un ouvrage sans chaleur, sans invention, sans interet, qui n'a pas meme le merite de la versification & du style, & dont il est impossible de soutenir la lecture.— I must observe, however, that Tasso, in his Essay on Epic Poetry, bestows a very high encomium on that part of Petrarch's Latin poem in which he celebrates the loves of Sophonisba and Masinissa; and indeed the censure of this amiable French writer, who in other points has done ample justice to the merits of Petrarch, appears to me infinitely too severe. There are many passages in this neglected Poem conceived with great force and imagination, and expressed with equal elegance of language.

guage. I ſhall ſelect ſome verſes from that part of it which has been honoured by the applauſe of Taſſo. The following lines deſcribe the anguiſh of the young Numidian Prince, when he is conſtrained to abandon his lovely bride:

Volvitur inde thoro (quoniam ſub pectore pernox
Sævit amor, lacerantque truces præcordia curæ)
Uritur, invigilant mœror, metus, ira, furorque,
Sæpe & abſentem lacrymans dum ſtringit amicam
Sæpe thoro dedit amplexus, et dulcia verba.
Poſtquam nulla valent violento fræna dolori,
Incipit, et longis ſolatur damna querelis.
Cura mihi nimium, vita mihi dulcior omni
Sophoniſba vale: non te mea cura videbo
Leniter æthereos poſthac componere vultus,
Effuſoſque auro religantem ex more capillos.
Dulcia, non cælum mulcentia verba, Deoſque,
Oris odorati, ſecretaque murmura carpam.
Solus ero gelidoque inſternam membra cubili,
Atque utinam ſocio componat amica ſepulchro,
Et ſimul hic vetitos, illic concorditer annos
Contingat duxiſſe mihi ſors optima buſti.
Si cinis amborum commixtis morte medullis
Unus erit, Scipio noſtros non ſcindet amores.
O utinam infernis etiam nunc una latebris
Umbra ſimus, liceat pariter per clauſtra vagari
Myrtea, nec noſtros Scipio disjungat amores.
Ibimus una ambo flentes, et paſſibus iiſdem
Ibimus, æterno connexi fœdere, nec nos
Ferreus aut æquos Scipio interrumpet amores.

The well-known cataſtrophe of the unfortunate Sophoniſba is related with much poetical ſpirit. The cloſe of her life, and her firſt appearance in the regions of the dead, are peculiarly ſtriking.

Illa manu pateramque tenens, & lumina cœlo
Attollens, Sol alme, inquit, ſuperique valete!

Maſiniſſa

Masinissa vale, nostri memor: inde malignum
Ceu sitiens haurit non mota fronte venenum,
Tartareasque petit violentus spiritus umbras.

Nulla magis Stygios mirantum obsessa corona
Umbra lacus subiit, postquam divisa triformis
Partibus haud æquis stetit ingens machina mundi.
Obtuitu attonito stabant horrentia circum
Agmina Pœnarum, sparsoque rigentia villo
Eumenidum tacitis inhiabant rictibus ora.
Regia vis oculis inerat, pallorque verendus
Et vetus egregia majestas fronte manebat.
Indignata tamen superis, irataque morti
Ibat et exiguo defigens lumina flexu.

With Petrarch I may close this cursory review of the neglected authors who wrote Heroic poems in Latin, during the course of the dark ages.—A peculiar circumstance induces me to add another name to the preceding list. John, Abbot of Peterborough, in the reign of Edward the Third, wrote an Heroic poem, entitled Bellum Navarrense, 1366, de Petro rege Aragoniæ, & Edwardo Principe. This performance, containing five hundred and sixty verses, is said to be preserved in MS. in the Bodleian Library; and I have thought it worthy of notice, because it treats of the very subject on which Dryden informs us he had once projected an Epic poem.

Of the many Latin compositions of the Epic kind, which later times have produced, the Christiad of Vida, the Sarcotis of Massenius, and the Constantine of Mambrun, appear to me the most worthy of regard; but even these are seldom perused: and indeed the Poet, who in a polished age prefers the use of a dead language to that of a living one, can only expect, and perhaps only deserves, the attention of a few curious sequestered students.

NOTE IV. VERSE 81.

Thy daring Dante his wild Viſion ſung.] Dante Allighieri was born at Florence, in May 1265, of an ancient and honourable family. Boccacio, who lived in the ſame period, has left a very curious and entertaining Treatiſe, on the Life, the Studies, and Manners of this extraordinary Poet; whom he regarded as his maſter, and for whoſe memory he profeſſed the higheſt veneration. This intereſting biographer relates, that Dante, before he was nine years old, conceived a paſſion for the lady whom he has immortalized in his ſingular Poem. Her age was near his own; and her name was Beatrice, the daughter of Folco Portinari, a noble citizen of Florence. Of this fair one the beſt accounts are obſcure. Some refining commentators have even denied her corporeal exiſtence; affirming her to be nothing more or leſs than Theology. But we may queſtion if Theology was ever the miſtreſs of ſo young a lover. The paſſion of Dante, however, like that of his ſucceſſor Petrarch, ſeems to have been of the chaſte and Platonic kind, according to the account he has himſelf given of it, in one of his early productions, entitled Vita Nuova; a mixture of myſterious poetry and proſe, in which he mentions both the origin of his affection and the death of his miſtreſs, who, according to Boccacio, died at the age of twenty-four. The ſame author aſſerts, that Dante fell into a deep melancholy in conſequence of this event, from which his friends endeavoured to raiſe him, by perſuading him to marriage. After ſome time he followed their advice, and repented it; for he unfortunately made choice of a lady who bore ſome reſemblance to the celebrated Xantippe. The Poet, not poſſeſſing the patience of Socrates, ſeparated himſelf from her with ſuch vehement expreſſions of diſlike, that he never afterwards admitted her to his preſence, though ſhe had borne him ſeveral children.—In the early part of his life he gained ſome credit in a military character; diſtinguiſhing himſelf by his bravery in an action where the Florentines obtained a ſignal victory over the citizens of Arezzo. He became ſtill more eminent by the acquiſition of civil honours; and at the age of thirty-five he roſe to be one of the chief magiſtrates of Florence, when that dignity was conferred by the ſuffrages of the people. From this ex-

altation the Poet himſelf dated his principal misfortunes, as appears from the fragment of a letter quoted by Lionardo Bruni, one of his early biographers, where Dante ſpeaks of his political failure with that liberal frankneſs which integrity inſpires.—Italy was at that time diſtracted by the contending factions of the Ghibellins and the Guelphs: the latter, among whom Dante took an active part, were again divided into the Blacks and the Whites. Dante, ſays Gravina, exerted all his influence to unite theſe inferior parties; but his efforts were ineffectual, and he had the misfortune to be unjuſtly perſecuted by thoſe of his own faction. A powerful citizen of Florence, named Corſo Donati, had taken meaſures to terminate theſe inteſtine broils, by introducing Charles of Valois, brother to Philip the Fair, King of France. Dante, with great vehemence, oppoſed this diſgraceful project, and obtained the baniſhment of Donati and his partizans. The exiles applied to the Pope (Boniface the VIIIth) and by his aſſiſtance ſucceeded in their deſign. Charles of Valois entered Florence in triumph, and thoſe who had oppoſed his admiſſion were baniſhed in their turn. Dante had been diſpatched to Rome as the ambaſſador of his party, and was returning, when he received intelligence of the revolution in his native city. His enemies, availing themſelves of his abſence, had procured an iniquitous ſentence againſt him, by which he was condemned to baniſhment, and his poſſeſſions were confiſcated. His two enthuſiaſtic biographers, Boccacio and Manetti, expreſs the warmeſt indignation againſt this injuſtice of his country. Dante, on receiving the intelligence, took refuge in Siena, and afterwards in Arezzo, where many of his party were aſſembled. An attempt was made to ſurprize the city of Florence, by a ſmall army which Dante is ſuppoſed to have attended: the deſign miſcarried, and our Poet is conjectured to have wandered to various parts of Italy, till he found a patron in the great Can della Scala, Prince of Verona, whom he has celebrated in his Poem. The high ſpirit of Dante was ill ſuited to courtly dependence; and he is ſaid to have loſt the favour of his Veroneze patron by the rough frankneſs of his behaviour. From Verona he retired to France, according to Manetti; and Boccacio affirms that he diſputed in the Theological Schools of Paris with great reputation. Bayle queſtions his viſiting Paris at this period of his life, and thinks it improbable, that a man, who had been one of

the chief magiſtrates of Florence, ſhould condeſcend to engage in the public ſquabbles of the Pariſian Theologiſts; but the ſpirit both of Dante, and the times in which he lived, ſufficiently account for this exerciſe of his talents; and his reſidence in France at this ſeaſon is confirmed by Boccacio, in his life of our Poet, which Bayle ſeems to have had no opportunity of conſulting.

The election of Henry Count of Luxemburgh to the empire, in November 1308, afforded Dante a proſpect of being reſtored to his native city, as he attached himſelf to the intereſt of the new Emperor, in whoſe ſervice he is ſuppoſed to have written his Latin treatiſe De Monarchia, in which he aſſerted the rights of the Empire againſt the encroachments of the Papacy. In the year 1311, he inſtigated Henry to lay ſiege to Florence; in which enterprize, ſays one of his Biographers, he did not appear in perſon, from motives of reſpect towards his native city. The Emperor was repulſed by the Florentines; and his death, which happened in the ſucceeding year, deprived Dante of all hopes concerning his re-eſtabliſhment in Florence.

After this diſappointment, he is ſuppoſed to have paſſed ſome years in roving about Italy in a ſtate of poverty and diſtreſs, till he found an honourable eſtabliſhment at Ravenna, under the protection of Guido Novello da Polenta, the lord of that city, who received this illuſtrious exile with the moſt endearing liberality, continued to protect him through the few remaining years of his life, and extended his munificence to the aſhes of the Poet.

Eloquence was one of the many talents which Dante poſſeſſed in an eminent degree. On this account he is ſaid to have been employed on fourteen different embaſſies in the courſe of his life, and to have ſucceeded in moſt of them. His patron Guido had occaſion to try his abilities in a ſervice of this nature, and diſpatched him as his ambaſſador to negociate a peace with the Venetians, who were preparing for hoſtilities againſt Ravenna. Manetti aſſerts that he was unable to procure a public audience at Venice, and returned to Ravenna by land, from his apprehenſions of the Venetian fleet; when the fatigue of his journey, and the mortification of failing in his attempt to preſerve his generous patron from the impending danger, threw him into a fever, which terminated in death on the 14th of September 1321. He died, however,

in

in the palace of his friend, and the affectionate Guido paid the most tender regard to his memory. This magnificent patron, says Boccacio, commanded the body to be adorned with poetical ornaments, and, after being carried on a bier through the streets of Ravenna by the most illustrious citizens, to be deposited in a marble coffin. He pronounced himself the funeral oration, and expressed his design of erecting a splendid monument in honour of the deceased: a design which his subsequent misfortunes rendered him unable to accomplish. At his request, many epitaphs were written on the Poet: the best of them, says Boccacio, by Giovanni del Virgilio of Bologna, a famous author of that time, and the intimate friend of Dante. Boccacio then cites a few Latin verses, not worth transcribing, six of which are quoted by Bayle as the composition of Dante himself, on the authority of Paul Jovius. In 1483 Bernardo Bembo, the father of the celebrated Cardinal, raised a handsome monument over the neglected ashes of the Poet, with the following inscription:

Exigua tumuli Danthes hic sorte jacebas
  Squallenti nulli cognita pæne situ;
At nunc marmoreo subnixus conderis arcu,
  Omnibus et cultu splendidiore nites;
Nimirum Bembus, Musis incensus Etruscis,
  Hoc tibi, quem in primis hæ coluere, dedit.

Before this period the Florentines had vainly endeavoured to obtain the bones of their great Poet from the city of Ravenna. In the age of Leo the Xth they made a second attempt, by a solemn application to the Pope, for that purpose; and the great Michael Angelo, an enthusiastic admirer of Dante, very liberally offered to execute a magnificent monument to the Poet. The hopes of the Florentines were again unsuccessful. The particulars of their singular petition may be found in the notes to Condivi's Life of Michael Angelo.

The person and manners of Dante are thus represented by the descriptive pen of Boccacio: — "Fu adunque questo nostro Poeta di Mezzana statura; e poichè alla matura età fu pervenuto, andò alquanto gravetto, ed era il suo andar grave, e mansueto, di onestissimi panni sempre vestito,

in quello abito, che era alla sua matura età convenevole; il suo volto fu lungo, il naso aquilino, gli occhi anzi grossi, che piccioli, le mascelle grandi, e dal labbro di sotto, era quel di sopra avanzato; il colore era bruno, i capelli, e la barba spessi neri e crespi, e sempre nella faccia malinconico e pensoso——Ne costumi publici e domestici mirabilmente fu composto e ordinato; più che niuno altro cortese e civile; nel cibo

e nel

A GUIDO CAVALCANTI.

Guido, vorrei, che tu, e Lappo, ed io,
Fossimo presi per incantamento,
E messi ad un vassel, ch'ad ogni vento
Per mare andasse a voler vostro e mio;
Sicché fortuna, od altro tempo rio,
Non ci potesse dare impedimento:
Anzi vivendo sempre in noi talento
Di stare insieme crescesse 'l disio.
E monna Vanna, e monna Bice poi,
Con quella su il numer delle trenta,
Con noi ponesse il buono incantatore:
E quivi ragionar sempre d' amore:
E ciascuna di lor fosse contenta,
Siccome io credo che sariamo noi.

These lively verses were evidently written before the Poet lost the object of his earliest attachment, as she is mentioned by the name of Bice. At what time, and in what place, he executed the great and singular work which has rendered him immortal, his numerous Commentators seem unable to determine. Boccacio asserts, that he began it in his thirty-fifth year, and had finished seven Cantos of his Inferno before his exile; that in the plunder of his house, on that event, the begin-

ning

e nel poto fu modestissimo.——Though Dante is described as much inclined to melancholy, and his genius particularly delighted in the gloomy and sublime, yet in his early period of life he seems to have possessed all the lighter graces of sprightly composition, as appears from the following airy and sportive sonnet:

IMITATION.

Henry! I wish that you, and Charles, and I,
  By some sweet spell within a bark were plac'd,
  A gallant bark with magic virtue grac'd,
  Swift at our will with every wind to fly:
So that no changes of the shifting sky,
  No stormy terrors of the watery waste,
  Might bar our course, but heighten still our taste
  Of sprightly joy, and of our social tie:
Then, that my Lucy, Lucy fair and free,
  With those soft nymphs on whom your souls are bent,
  The kind magician might to us convey,
To talk of love throughout the live-long day;
  And that each fair might be as well content
  As I in truth believe our hearts would be.

---

ning of his poem was fortunately preserved, but remained for some time neglected, till its merit being accidentally discovered by an intelligent Poet named Dino, it was sent to the Marquis Maroello Malespina, an Italian nobleman, by whom Dante was then protected. The Marquis restored these lost papers to the Poet, and intreated him to proceed in a work which opened in so promising a manner. To this incident we are probably indebted for the poem of Dante, which he must have continued under

under all the disadvantages of an unfortunate and agitated life. It does not appear at what time he completed it; perhaps before he quitted Verona, as he dedicated the Paradise to his Veronese patron.——The Critics have variously accounted for his having called his poem Comedia. 'He gave it that title, said one of his sons, because it opens with distress, and closes with felicity. The very high estimation in which this production was held by his country, appears from a singular institution. The republic of Florence, in the year 1373, assigned a public stipend to a person appointed to read lectures on the poem of Dante: Boccacio was the first person engaged in this office; but his death happening in two years after his appointment, his Comment extended only to the seventeen first Cantos of the Inferno. The critical dissertations that have been written on Dante are almost as numerous as those to which Homer has given birth: the Italian, like the Grecian Bard, has been the subject of the highest panegyric, and of the grossest invective. Voltaire has spoken of him with that precipitate vivacity, which so frequently led that lively Frenchman to insult the reputation of the noblest writers. In one of his entertaining letters, he says to an Italian Abbé, "Je fais grand cas du courage, avec lequel vous avez osé dire que Dante etoit un fou, et son ouvrage un monstre ——— Le Dante pourra entrer dans les bibliotheques des curieux, mais il ne sera jamais lu." But more temperate and candid Critics have not been wanting to display the merits of this original Poet. Mr. Warton has introduced into his last volume on English Poetry, a judicious and spirited summary of Dante's performance. We have several versions of the celebrated story of Ugolino; but I believe no entire Canto of Dante has hitherto appeared in our language, though his whole work has been translated into French, Spanish, and Latin verse. The three Cantos which follow, were translated a few years ago, to oblige a particular friend. The Author has since been solicited to execute an entire translation of Dante; but the extreme inequality of this Poet would render such a work a very laborious undertaking, and it appears very doubtful how far such a version would interest our country. Perhaps the reception of these Cantos may discover to the Translator the sentiments of the public. At all events, he flatters himself that the ensuing portion of a celebrated poem may afford some pleasure from its novelty, as he has endeavoured to give the English reader an idea of

Dante's peculiar manner, by adopting his triple rhyme; and he does not recollect that this mode of versification has ever appeared before in our language; it has obliged him of course to make the number of translated lines correspond exactly with those of the original. The difficulties attending this metre will sufficiently shew themselves, and obtain some degree of indulgence from the intelligent and candid reader.

DELL' INFERNO.

CANTO I.

NEL mezzo del cammin di nostra vita
Mi ritrovai per una selva oscura,
Che la diritta via era smarrita:
E quanto à dir qual era, è cosa dura,
Questa selva selvaggia ed aspra e forte,
Che nel pensier rinnuova la paura.
Tanto è amara, che poco è più morte:
Ma per trattar del ben, ch'i vi trovai,
Dirò dell' altre cose, ch'i v'ho scorte.
I non so ben ridir, com'i v'entrai;
Tant'era pien di sonno in su quel punto,
Che la verace via abbandonai.
Ma po' ch'i fui al piè d'un colle giunto,
Là ove terminava quella valle,
Che m'avea di paura il cor compunto;
Guarda'in alto, e vidi le sue spalle
Vestite già de' raggi del pianeta,
Che mena dritto altrui per ogni calle.
Allor fu la paura un poco queta,
Che nel lago del cor m'era durata,
La notte, ch'i passai con tanta pieta.
E come quei, che con lena affannata
Uscito fuor del pelago alla riva,
Si volge all'aqua perigliosa, e guata;
Cosi l'animo mio, ch'ancor fuggiva,
Si vols' à retro à rimirar lo passo,
Che non lasciò giammai persona viva.

Poi

THE INFERNO OF DANTE.

CANTO I.

IN the mid ſeaſon of this mortal ſtrife,
I found myſelf within a gloomy grove,
Far wandering from the ways of perfect life:
The place I know not, where I chanc'd to rove,
It was a wood ſo wild, it wounds me ſore
But to remember with what ills I ſtrove:
Such ſtill my dread, that death is little more.
But I will tell the good which there I found.
High things 'twas there my fortune to explore:
Yet how I enter'd on that ſecret ground
I know not to explain; ſo much in ſleep
My mortal ſenſes at that hour were drown'd.
But when I reach'd the bottom of a ſteep,
That roſe to terminate the dreary vale,
Which made cold terrors thro' my boſom creep,
I look'd on high, where breath'd a purer gale,
And ſaw the ſummit gliſten with that ray
Which leads the wand'rer ſafe o'er hill and dale.
This ſoon began to chaſe thoſe fears away,
Which held my ſtruggling ſpirit bound ſo faſt
During that night of darkneſs and diſmay:
And, as th' exhauſted wretch, by fortune caſt
Safe from the ſtormy deep upon the ſhore,
Turns to ſurvey the perils he has paſt,
So turn'd my ſoul, ere yet its dread was o'er,
Back to contemplate that myſterious ſtrait
Where living mortal never paſt before.

Ariſing

Poi ch'ebbi ripoſato il corpo laſſo,
Ripreſi via per la piaggia deſerta,
Si che 'l piè fermo ſempre era 'l più baſſo.
Ed ecco, quaſi al cominciar dell' erta,
Una lonza leggiera e preſta molto,
Che di pel maculato era coperta.
E non mi ſi partia dinanzi al volto;
Anz' impediva tanto 'l mio cammino,
Ch'i fu per ritornar piu volte volto.
Temp' era dal principio del mattino,
E 'l ſol montava in ſu con quelle ſtelle,
Ch' eran con lui, quando l'amor divino
Moſſe da prima quelle coſe belle
Si ch'a bene ſperar m'era cagione
Di quella fera la gaietta pelle,
L'ora del tempo, e la dolce ſtagione:
Ma non ſi, che paura non mi deſſe
La viſta, che m'apparve d'un leone.
Queſti parea, che contra me veneſſe
Con la teſt'alta, e con rabbioſa fame,
Si che parea, che l'aer ne temeſſe:
Ed una lupa, che di tutte brame
Sembiava carca con la ſua magrezza,
E molte genti fe' già viver grame.
Queſta mi porſe tanto di gravezza
Con la paura, ch'uſcia di ſua viſta,
Ch'i perde' la ſperanza dell' altezza.
E quale è quei, che volentieri acquiſta,
E gingne 'l tempo, che perder lo face,
Che 'n tutt' i ſuoi penſier piange, e s'attriſta;
Tal me fece la beſtia ſenza pace,
Che venendomi 'ncontro, a poco a poco
Mi ripingeva là, dove 'l ſol tace.
Mentre ch'i rovinava in baſſo loco,
Dinanzi gli occhi mi ſi fu offerto
Chi per lungo ſilenzio parea fioco.

Arising soon from this repose elate,
Up the rough steep my journey I begin,
My lower foot sustaining all my weight.
Here, while my toilsome way I slowly win,
Behold a nimble Panther springs to sight!
And beauteous spots adorn his motley skin:
He at my presence shew'd no signs of fright,
But rather strove to bar my doubtful way;
I often turn'd, and oft resolv'd on flight.
'Twas now the chearful hour of rising day;
The sun advanc'd in that propitious sign
Which first beheld his radiant beams display
Creation's charms, the work of love divine!
So that I now was rais'd to hope sublime,
By these bright omens of a fate benign,
The beauteous Beast and the sweet hour of prime.
But soon I lost that hope; and shook yet more
To see a Lion in this lonely clime:
With open jaws, athirst for human gore,
He rush'd towards me in his hungry ire;
Air seem'd to tremble at his savage roar.
With him, enflam'd with every fierce desire,
A famish'd She-wolf, like a spectre, came;
Beneath whose gripe shall many a wretch expire.
Such sad oppression seiz'd my sinking frame,
Such horror at these strange tremendous sights,
My hopes to climb the hill no longer aim;
But, as the wretch whom lucre's lust incites,
In the curst hour which scatters all his wealth,
Sinks in deep sorrow, dead to all delights,
So was I robb'd of all my spirit's health,
And to the quarter where the sun grows mute,
Driven by this Beast, who crept on me by stealth.
While I retreated from her dread pursuit,
A manly figure my glad eyes survey'd,
Whose voice was like the whisper of a lute.

Quando i' vidi coſtui nel gran diſerto;
Miſerere di me gridai a lui,
Qual che tu ſii, od ombra, od uomo certo.
Riſpoſemi: non uomo, uomo già fui,
E li parenti miei furon Lombardi,
E Mantovani, per patria amendui.
Nacqui ſub Julio, ancorche foſſe tardi,
E viſſi a Roma, ſotto 'l buono Aguſto,
Al tempo degli Dei falſi e bugiardi.
Poeta fui, e cantai di quel giuſto
Figlioul d'Anchiſe, che venne da Troja,
Poichè 'l ſuperbo Ilion fu combuſto.
Ma tu, perchè ritorni à tanta noja?
Perchè non ſali il dilettoſo monte,
Ch'è principio e cagion di tutta gioja?
Or ſe' tu quel Virgilio, e quella fonte,
Che ſpande di parlar sì largo fiume?
Riſpoſi lui, con vergognoſà fronte.
Oh degli altri poeti onore e lume,
Vagliami 'l lungo ſtudio, e'l grande amore,
Che m'han fatto cercar lo tuo volume.
Tu ſe' lo mio maeſtro, e'l mio autore:
Tu ſe' ſolo colui, da cu'io tolſi
Lo bello ſtile, che m'ha fatto onore.
Vedi la beſtia, per cu'io mi volſi:
Ajutami da lei, famoſo ſaggio,
Ch'ella mi fa tremar le vene e i polſi.
A te convien tenere altro viaggio,
Riſpoſe, poichè lagrimar mi vide,
Se vuoi campar d'eſto luogo ſelvaggio:
Che queſta beſtia, per la qual tu gride,
Non laſcia altrui paſſar per la ſua via,
Ma tanto lo 'mpediſce, che l'uccide:
Ed ha natura sì malvagia e ria,
Che mai non empie la bramoſa voglia,
E, dopo 'l paſto, ha più fame, che pria.

Molti

Soon as I ſaw him in this dreary glade,
Take pity on me, to this form I cry'd,
Be thou ſubſtantial man, or fleeting ſhade!—
A man I was (the gracious form reply'd)
And both my parents were of Lombard race;
They in their native Mantua liv'd and dy'd:
I liv'd at Rome, rich in a monarch's grace,
Beneath the good Auguſtus' letter'd reign,
While fabled Gods were ſerv'd with worſhip baſe.
A Bard I was: the ſubject of my ſtrain
That juſt and pious Chief who ſail'd from Troy,
Sinking in aſhes on the ſanguine plain.
But thou, whom theſe portentous ſights annoy,
Why doſt thou turn? why not aſcend the mount,
Source of all good, and ſummit of all joy!—
Art thou that Virgil? thou! that copious fount
Of richeſt eloquence, ſo clear, ſo bright?
I anſwer'd, bluſhing at his kind account;
O thou! of Poets the pure guide and light!
Now let me profit by that fond eſteem
Which kept thy ſong for ever in my ſight!
Thou art my Maſter! thou my Bard ſupreme,
From whom alone my fond ambition drew
That purer ſtyle which I my glory deem!
O! from this Beaſt, ſo hideous to the view,
Save me! O ſave me! thou much-honour'd Sage!
For growing terrors all my power ſubdue.—
A different road muſt lead thee from her rage,
(He ſaid, obſervant of my ſtarting tears)
And from this wild thy ſpirit diſengage;
For that terrific Beaſt, which caus'd thy fears,
Worries each wretch that in her road ſhe ſpies,
Till death at length, his ſole relief, appears.
So keen her nature, ſleep ne'er ſeals her eyes;
Her ravenous hunger no repaſt can ſate;
Food only ſerves to make its fury riſe.

Molti ſon gli animali, a cui s'ammoglia;
E più ſaranno ancora, infin che 'l veltro
Verrà, che la farà morir di doglia.
Queſti non ciberà terra, nè peltro,
Ma ſapienza, e amore, e virtute,
E ſua nazion ſarà tra Feltro e Feltro:
Di quell' umile Italia fia ſalute,
Per cui morío la Vergine Cammilla,
Eurialo, e Turno, e Niſo di ferute:
Queſti la caccerà per ogni villa,
Fin chè l'avrà rimeſſa nello 'nferno,
La onde 'nvidia prima dipartilla.
Ond' io, per lo tuo me', penſo e diſcerno,
Che tu mi ſegui, ed io ſarò tua guida,
E trarrotti di qui, per luogo eterno,
Ov' udirai le diſperate ſtrida,
Vedrai gli antiche ſpiriti dolenti,
Che la ſeconda morte ciaſcun grida:
E poi vedrai color, che ſon contenti
Nel fuoco; perchè ſperan di venire,
Quando che ſia, alle beate genti:
Alle qua' poi ſe tu vorrai ſalire,
Anima fia, a ciò di me più degna:
Con lei ti laſcerò nel mio partire:
Che quello 'mperador, che laſsù regna,
Perch' i' fu' ribellante alla ſua legge,
Non vuol che'n ſua città per me ſi vegna.
In tutte parti impera, e quivi regge:
Quivi è la ſua cittade, e l'alto ſeggio:
O felice colui, cu' ivi elegge!
Ed io a lui: Poeta, i' ti rechieggio,
Per quello Iddio, che tu non conoſceſti,
Acciocch' i' fugga queſto male e peggio,
Che tu mi meni, là dov'or diceſti,
Sì ch' i' vegga la porta di ſan Pietro,
E color che tu fai cotanto meſti.
Allor ſi moſſe, ed io li tenni dietro.

She calls from different animals her mate;
And long ſhall ſhe produce an offspring baſe,
Then from a mighty victor meet her fate.
Nor pomp nor riches ſhall that victor grace,
But truth, and love, and all excelling worth;
He from his reſcu'd land all ill ſhall chaſe,
The ſaviour of the realm that gives him birth,
Of Italy, for whom Camilla fell,
And Turnus, fighting for his native earth,
And Ninus, with the friend he lov'd ſo well.
The Beaſt this victor to that den ſhall drive
Whence Envy let her looſe, her native hell!
Now for thy good, well-pleas'd, I will contrive,
That by my aid, while I thy ſteps controul,
Thou ſhalt in ſafety at thoſe realms arrive
Where thou ſhalt ſee the tortur'd ſpirits roll,
And hear each mourn his miſerable fate,
Calling for death on his immortal ſoul.
Then ſhalt thou viſit thoſe, who in a ſtate
Of purifying fire are ſtill content,
And for their promis'd heaven ſubmiſſive wait:
If to that heaven thy happy courſe is bent,
A worthier guard will ſoon my place ſupply;
A purer ſpirit, for thy guidance ſent!
For that Immortal Power, who rules on high,
Becauſe I ne'er his perfect laws have known,
His ſacred preſence will to me deny.
There in the realms of light he fix'd his throne;
There o'er the world Almighty Lord he reigns:
O bleſt the ſervant whom he deigns to own!—
Poet (I anſwer'd) by thy living ſtrains,
And by that God, tho' not reveal'd to thee,
That I may 'ſcape from theſe, and heavier pains,
Be thou my leader, where thy way is free!
So that my eyes St. Peter's gate may find,
And all the wonders of the deep may ſee!
He led, and I attentive march'd behind.

CANTO II.

Lo giorno ſe n'andava, e l'aer bruno
Toglieva gli animai, che ſono 'n terra,
Dalle fatiche loro: ed io ſol' uno
M'apparecchiava a ſoſtener la guerra,
Si del cammino, e sì della pietate,
Che ritrarrà la mente, che non erra.
O Muſe, o alto 'ngegno, or m'ajutate:
O mente, che ſcriveſti ciò ch'i' vidi,
Qui ſi parrà la tua nobilitate.
Io cominciai: Poeta, che mi guidi,
Guarda la mia virtù, s'ell' è poſſente,
Prima ch' all' alto paſſo tu mi fidi.
Tu dici, che di Silvio lo parente,
Corrutibile ancora, ad immortale
Secolo andò, e fu ſenſibilmente.
Però ſe l'avverſario d'ogni male
Corteſe fu, penſando l'alto effetto,
Ch' uſcir dovea di lui, e 'l chi, e 'l quale,
Non pare indegno ad uomo d'intelletto:
Ch' ei fu dell'alma Roma, e di ſuo 'mpero,
Nell' empireo ciel, per padre, eletto:
La quale, e'l quale (a voler dir lo vero)
Fur ſtabiliti, per lo loco ſanto,
U' ſiede il ſucceſſor del maggior Piero.
Per queſta andata, onde li dai tu vanto,
Inteſe coſe, che furon cagione
Di ſua vittoria, e del papale ammanto.
Andovvi poi lo vas d'elezione,
Per recarne conforto, a quella fede,
Ch' è principio alla via di ſalvazione.

CANTO II.

THE day was ſinking, and the duſky air
On all the animals of earth beſtow'd
Reſt from their labours. I alone prepare
To meet new toil, both from my dreary road,
And pious wiſh to paint in worthy phraſe
The Unerring Mind, and his divine abode.
O ſacred Muſes! now my genius raiſe!
O Memory, who writeſt what I ſaw,
From hence ſhall ſpring thy ever-during praiſe!
Kind Poet (I began, with trembling awe)
Mark if my ſoul be equal to this aim!
Nor into ſcenes too hard my weakneſs draw!
Thy Song declares, the Chief of pious fame
Appear'd among the bleſt, retaining ſtill
His mortal ſenſes and material frame;
Yet, if the great Oppoſer of all ill
Shew'd grace to him, as knowing what and who
Should from him riſe, and mighty things fulfil,
Moſt worthy he appear'd, in Reaſon's view,
That Heaven ſhould chuſe him as the Roman Sire,
Source of that empire which ſo widely grew,
Mark'd in its growth by the angelic choir
To be the ſeat where Sanctity ſhould reſt,
And Peter's heirs yet raiſe dominion higher.
From his dark journey, in thy Song expreſt,
He learn'd myſterious things; from whence aroſe
Rome's early grandeur and the Papal veſt.
To Paul, while living, heaven's high powers diſcloſe
Their ſecret bliſs, that he may thence receive
Strength in that faith from which ſalvation flows.

Ma io, perchè venirvi? o chi 'l concede?
  Io non Enea, io non Paolo ſono:
  Me degno à ciò, nè io, nè altri il crede.
Perchè ſe del venire i' m'abbandono,
  Temo che la venuta non ſia folle:
  Se' ſavio, e 'ntendi me', ch'i' non ragiono.
E quale è quei, che diſvuol ciò ch'e' volle,
  E per nuovi penſier cangia propoſta,
  Si che del cominciar tutto ſi tolle;
Tal mi fec' io' in quella oſcura coſta:
  Perchè, penſando, conſumai la 'mpreſa,
  Che fu, nel cominciar, cotanto toſta.
Se io ho ben la tua parola inteſa,
  Riſpoſe del magnanimo quell' ombra,
  L'anima tua è da viltate offeſa:
La qual molte fiate l'uomo ingombra,
  Si che d'onrata impreſa lo rivolve,
  Come falſo veder beſtia, quand' ombra.
Da queſta tema acciocchè tu ti ſolve,
  Dirotti, perch' i' venni, e quel, ch'io'nteſi,
  Nel primo punto, che di te mi dolve.
Io era tra color, che ſon ſoſpeſi,
  E donna mi chiamò beata e bella,
  Tal che di comandare i' la richieſi.
Lucevan gli occhi ſuoi più, che la ſtella:
  E cominciommi a dir ſoave e piana,
  Con angelica voce, in ſua favella:
O anima corteſe Mantovana,
  Di cui la fama ancor nel mondo dura,
  E durerà, quanto 'l moto lontana:
L'amico mio, e non della ventura,
  Nella deſerta piaggia è impedito
  Sì nel cammin, che volto è per paura:
E temo, che non ſia già sì ſmarrito,
  Ch'io mi ſia tardi al ſoccorſo levata,
  Per quel, ch' io ho di lui, nel Cielo, udito.

But how may I this high exploit atchieve?
  I'm not Æneas, nor the holy Paul:
  Of this unworthy I myſelf believe:
If then I follow at thy friendly call,
  Midway perchance my trembling ſoul may ſink:
  Wiſe as thou art, thou may'ſt foreſee my fall.
Now as a man who, ſhudd'ring on the brink
  Of ſome great venture, ſudden ſhifts his mind,
  And feels his ſpirit from the peril ſhrink;
So, in this ſcene of doubt and darkneſs join'd,
  Wavering I waſted thought in wild affright,
  And the firſt ardour of my ſoul reſign'd.
If thy faint words I underſtand aright,
  (Reply'd the mighty and magnanimous ſhade)
  Thoſe miſts of fear have dimm'd thy mental ſight,
Which oft the ſeat of human ſenſe invade,
  And make blind mortals from high deeds recoil,
  By Terror's airy phantaſies betray'd:
But, that ſuch fears thy ſoul no more may ſoil,
  I'll tell thee whence I came; at whoſe requeſt;
  When firſt I pitied thy uncertain toil.
From the ſuſpended hoſt in which I reſt,
  A lovely Spirit call'd me, fair as light;
  Eager I waited on her high beheſt;
While eyes beyond the ſolar radiance bright,
  And with the ſweetneſs of an angel's tongue,
  Thus her ſoft words my willing aid invite:
O ever gentle ſhade, from Mantua ſprung!
  Whoſe fame unfading on the earth ſhall laſt
  As long as earth in ambient air is hung;
My friend, whoſe love all baſe deſire ſurpaſt,
  In yon drear deſart finds his paſſage barr'd,
  And compaſs'd round with terrors ſtands aghaſt;
And much I fear, beſet with dangers hard,
  He may be loſt beyond all friendly reach,
  And I from heaven deſcend too late a guard.

Or muovi, e con la tua parola ornata,
E con ciò, che ha meſtieri al ſuo campare,
L'ajuta sì, ch'i' ne ſia conſolata.
I' ſon Beatrice, che ti faccio andare:
Vegno di loco, ove tornar diſio:
Amor mi moſſe, che mi fa parlare.
Quando ſarò dinanzi al ſignor mio,
Di te mi loderò ſovente a lui:
Tacette allora, e poi comincia' io:
O donna di virtù, ſola, per cui,
L'umana ſpezie eccede ogni contento
Da quel ciel, ch' ha minor li cerchi ſuoi:
Tanto m'aggrada 'l tuo comandamento,
Che l'ubbidir, ſe già foſſe, m'è tardi:
Più non t'è uopo aprirmi 'l tuo talento.
Ma dimmi la cagion, che non ti guardi
Dello ſcender quaggiuſo, in queſto centro,
Dall' ampio loco, ove tornar tu ardi.
Da che tu vuoi ſaper cotanto addentro,
Dirotti brevemente, mi riſpoſe,
Perch'i' non temo di venir qua entro.
Temer ſi dee di ſole quelle coſe,
Ch' hanno potenza di fare altrui male:
Dell' altre nò, che non ſon pauroſe.
Io ſon fatta da Dio, ſua mercè, tale,
Che la voſtra miſeria non mi tange,
Nè fiamma d'eſto 'ncendio non m'aſſale.
Donna è gentil nel ciel, che ſi compiange
Di queſto 'mpedimento, ov' i' ti mando,
Sì che duro giudicio laſſù frange.
Queſta chieſe Lucía in ſuo dimando,
E diſſe: Ora abbiſogna il tuo fedele
Di te, ed io a te lo raccomando.
Lucía nimica di ciaſcun crudele
Si moſſe, e venne al loco, dov'i' era,
Che mi ſedea con l'antica Rachele:

Diſſe,

But go! and with thy ſoft ſoul-ſoothing ſpeech,
And all the aid thy wiſdom may inſpire,
The ways of ſafety to this wanderer teach!
My name is Beatrice: the heavenly quire
For this I left, tho' ever left with pain;
But love ſuggeſted what I now deſire.
When I the preſence of my lord regain,
On thee my praiſes with delight ſhall dwell.
So ſpake this angel, in her heavenly ſtrain.
Bright Fair, (I cry'd) who didſt on earth excel
All that e'er ſhone beneath the lunar ſphere,
And every mind to virtuous love impel!
Had I e'en now perform'd the taſk I hear,
That ſwift performance I ſhould think too ſlow:
Nor needs there more; your gracious will is clear:
Yet how you venture, I would gladly know,
From thoſe pure realms, to which again you fly,
So near the center of eternal woe.
What you require (ſhe ſaid, in kind reply)
I briefly will explain: how thus I dare,
Unconſcious of alarm, theſe depths to try.
From theſe things only ſprings our fearful care,
By which our hapleſs friends may ſuffer ill;
But not from other; for no fear is there.
Such am I form'd, by Heaven's moſt gracious will,
That torture cannot touch my purer frame,
E'en where fierce fires his flaming region fill.
A gentle ſpirit (Lucia is her name)
In heaven laments the hardſhips of my friend,
For whom I aſk your aid: to me ſhe came,
And kindly bade me to his woes attend:
Behold (ſhe ſaid) thy ſervant in diſtreſs!
And I his ſafety to thy care commend.
Lucia, the friend of all whom ills oppreſs,
Me, where I ſate with penſive Rachel, ſought,
In heavenly contemplation's deep receſs:

Diſſe, Beatrice, loda di Dio vera,
Che non ſoccorri quei, che t'amò tanto;
Ch' uſcío per te della volgare ſchiera?
Non odi tu la pieta del ſuo pianto,
Non vedi tu la morte, che 'l combatte
Su la fiumana, ove 'l mar non ha vanto?
Al mondo non fur mai perſone ratte
A far lor pro, ed a fuggir lor danno,
Com' io, dopo cotai parole fatte,
Venni quaggiù dal mio beato ſcanno,
Fidandomi nel tuo parlare oneſto,
Ch' onora te, e quei, ch'udito l'hanno.
Poſcia che m'ebbe ragionato queſto,
Gli occhi lucenti, lagrimando, volſe:
Perchè mi fece del venir più preſto:
E venni à te così, com' ella volſe:
Dinanzi a quella fiera ti levai,
Che del bel monte il corto andar ti tolſe.
Dunque che è? perchè, perchè riſtai?
Perchè tanta viltà nel cuore allette?
Perchè ardire e franchezza non hai?
Poſcia che tai tre donne benedette
Curan di te, nella corte del Cielo,
E'l mio parlar tanto ben t'impromette?
Quale i fioretti, dal notturno gielo,
Chinati e chiuſi, poi che'l ſol gl'imbianca,
Si drizzan tutti aperti in loro ſtelo,
Tal mi fec' io, di mia virtute ſtanca:
E tanto buono ardire al cuor mi corſe,
Ch'i' cominciai, come perſona franca:
O pietoſa colei, che mi ſoccorſe,
E tu corteſe, ch'ubbidiſti toſto
Alle vere parole, che ti porſe!
Tu m'hai con deſiderio il cuor diſpoſto
Sì al venir, con le parole tue,
Ch'i' ſon tornato nel primo propoſto.

Or

In mercy's name (ſhe cry'd) thus loſt in thought,
  Seeſt thou not him who held thy charms ſo dear,
  Whom Love to riſe above the vulgar taught?
And doſt thou not his lamentation hear,
  Nor ſee the horror, which his ſtrength impairs,
  On yon wide torrent, with no haven near?
Never was mind, intent on worldly cares,
  So eager wealth to gain, or loſs to ſhun,
  As, when acquainted with theſe deadly ſnares,
I flew from the bleſt confines of the ſun,
  Truſting that eloquence, which to thy name
  And to thy followers ſuch praiſe has won.
She having thus explain'd her gracious aim,
  Turn'd her bright eyes, which tears of pity fill:
  And hence more ſwift to thy relief I came;
And, pleas'd to execute her heavenly will,
  I ſav'd thee from the fury of that Beaſt,
  Which barr'd thy journey up the brighter hill.
Why then, O why has all thy ardour ceas'd?
  And whence this faintneſs in thy feeble mind?
  Why has its noble energy decreas'd,
When theſe pure Spirits, for thy good combin'd,
  Watch o'er thy ſafety in their heavenly ſeat,
  And I reveal the favour thou ſhalt find?—
As tender flowers, reviv'd by ſolar heat,
  That thro' the chilling night have ſunk depreſt,
  Riſe and unfold, the welcome ray to meet;
So roſe my ſpirit, of new life poſſeſt;
  And, my warm heart on high atchievements bent,
  I thus my animating guide addreſt:
Gracious that Spirit who thy ſuccour ſent!
  And friendly thou, who freely haſt diſplay'd
  Thy zeal to execute her kind intent!
Thy ſoothing words have to my ſoul convey'd
  Such keen deſire to thoſe bright realms to ſoar,
  I ſcorn the terror that my ſtep delay'd.

Or va, ch'un ſol volere è d'amendue:
Tu duca, tu ſignore, e tu maeſtro:
Così li diſſi: e poichè moſſo fue,
Entrai per lo cammino alto e ſilveſtro.

CANTO III.

"PER me ſi va nella città dolente:
Per me ſi va nell' eterno dolore:
Per me ſi va tra la perduta gente.
Giuſtizia moſſe 'l mio alto fattore:
Fecemi la divina poteſtate,
La ſomma ſapienzia, e 'l primo amore.
Dinanzi a me non fur coſe create,
Se non eterne, ed io eterno duro:
Laſciate ogni ſperanza, voi che 'ntrate."
Queſte parole di colore oſcuro
Vid' io ſcritte al ſommo d'una porta:
Perch'io, Maeſtro, il ſenſo lor m'è duro.
Ed egli a me, come perſona accorta,
Qui ſi convien laſciare ogni ſoſpetto:
Ogni viltà convien, che qui ſia morta.
Noi ſem venuti al luogo, ov' i' t'ho detto,
Che tu vedrai le genti doloroſe,
Ch'hanno perduto 'l ben dello 'ntelletto.
E poichè la ſua mano alla mia poſe,
Con lieto volto, ond'i' mi confortai,
Mi miſe dentro alle ſegrete coſe.
Quivi ſoſpiri, pianti, e alti guai
Riſonavan, per l'aer ſenza ſtelle,
Perch'io al cominciar, ne lagrimai.
Diverſe lingue, orribili favelle,
Parole di dolore, accenti d'ira,
Voci alte e fioche, e ſuon di man con elle

Now lead !—thy pleaſure I diſpute no more.
  My lord, my maſter thou ! and thou my guard !—
  I ended here ; and, while he march'd before,
The gloomy road I enter'd, deep and hard.

CANTO III.

" THRO' me you paſs to Mourning's dark domain ;
    Thro' me to ſcenes where Grief muſt ever pine ;
  Thro' me, to Miſery's devoted train.
Juſtice and power in my Great Founder join,
  And love and wiſdom all his fabrics rear ;
  Wiſdom above controul, and love divine !
Before me, Nature ſaw no works appear,
  Save works eternal : ſuch was I ordain'd.
  Quit every hope, all ye who enter here !"
Theſe characters, where miſty darkneſs reign'd,
  High o'er a lofty gate I ſaw engrav'd.
  Ah Sire ! (ſaid I) hard things are here contain'd.
He, ſapient Guide ! my farther queſtion ſav'd,
  With ſpirit anſwering, " Here all doubt reſign,
  All weak diſtruſt, and every thought deprav'd ;
At length we've reach'd that gloomy drear confine,
  Where, as I ſaid, thou'lt ſee the mournful race
  For ever robb'd of Reaſon's light benign."
Then, ſtretching forth his hand with gentle grace,
  From whence new comfort through my boſom flows,
  He led me in to that myſterious place.
There ſighs, and wailings, and ſevereſt woes,
  Deeply reſounded through the ſtarleſs air ;
  And as I firſt advanc'd, my fears aroſe.
Each different cry, the murmuring notes of care,
  Accents of miſery, and words of ire,
  With all the ſounds of diſcord and deſpair,

Facevano un tumulto, il qual s'aggira
Sempre 'n quell' aria, senza tempo, tinta,
Come la rena quando 'l turbo spira.
Ed io, ch' avea d'error la testa cinta,
Dissi, Maestro, che è quel, ch' i' odo?
E che gent' è, che par nel duol sì vinta?
Ed egli a me: Questo misero modo
Tengon l' anime triste di coloro,
Che visser sanza infamia, e sanza lodo.
Mischiate sono a quel cattivo coro
Degli angeli, che non furon ribelli,
Nè fur fedeli a Dio, ma per se foro.
Cacciarli i ciel, per non esser men belli:
Nè lo profondo inferno gli riceve,
Ch'alcuna gloria i rei avrebber d'elli.
Ed io: Maestro, che è tanto greve
A lor, che lamentar gli fa sì forte?
Rispose: Dicerolti molto breve.
Questi non hanno speranza di morte:
E la lor cieca vita è tanto bassa,
Che 'nvidiosi son d'ognì altra sorte.
Fama di loro il mondo esser non lassa:
Misericordia e giustizia gli sdegna.
Non ragioniam di lor, ma guarda, e passa.
Ed io, che riguardai, vidi una insegna,
Che, girando, correva tanto ratta,
Che d'ogni posa mi pareva indegna:
E dietro le venía sì lunga tratta
Di gente, ch'i' non avrei mai creduto,
Che morte tanta n' avesse disfatta.
Poscia ch' io v'ebbi alcun riconosciuto,
Guardai, e vidi l'ombra di colui,
Che fece, per viltate, il gran rifiuto.
Incontanente intese, e certo fui,
Che quest' era la setta de' cattivi
A Dio spiacenti, ed a' nemici sui.

To form ſuch tumult in this ſcene conſpire,
As flies for ever round the gloomy waſte,
Like ſand when quicken'd by the whirlwind's fire.
I then (my mind with error ſtill diſgrac'd)
Exclaim'd—O Sire! what may this trouble mean?
What forms are theſe, by ſorrow ſo debas'd?—
He ſoon reply'd—Behold, theſe bounds between,
All who without or infamy or fame
Clos'd the blank buſineſs of their mortal ſcene!
They join thoſe angels, of ignoble name,
Who not rebell'd, yet were not faithful found;
Without attachment! ſelf alone their aim!
Heaven ſhuts them out from its unſullied bound;
And Hell refuſes to admit this train,
Leſt e'en the damn'd o'er theſe their triumph ſound.—
O Sire! (ſaid I) whence then this grievous pain,
That on our ears their lamentations grate?—
This (he reply'd) I will in brief explain:
Theſe have no hope that death may mend their fate;
And their blind days form ſo confus'd a maſs,
They pine with envy of each other's ſtate:
From earth their name has periſh'd, like the graſs;
E'en Mercy views them with a ſcornful eye.
We'll ſpeak of them no more: Behold! and paſs!—
I look'd, and ſaw a banner rais'd on high,
That whirl'd, unconſcious of a moment's ſtand,
With rapid circles in the troubled ſky:
Behind it, driven by Fate's ſupreme command,
Came ſuch a hoſt! I ne'er could have believ'd
Death had collected ſo complete a band.
When now I had the forms of all perceiv'd,
I ſaw the ſhade of that ignoble prieſt,
Of ſovereign power by indolence bereav'd.
Inſtant I knew, from every doubt releas'd,
Theſe were the baſe, the miſcreated crew
To whom the hate of God had never ceas'd.

 Vile

Questi sciaurati, che mai non fur vivi,
Erano ignudi, e stimolati molto
Da mosconi, e da vespe, ch'erano ivi.
Elle rigavan lor di sangue il volto,
Che mischiato di lagrime, a' lor piedi,
Da fastidiosi vermi era ricolto.
E poi, ch'a riguardare oltre mi diedi,
Vidi gente alla riva d'un gran fiume;
Perch' i' dissi: Maestro, or mi concedi,
Ch'io sappia, quali sono, e qual costume
Le fa parer di trapassar sì pronte,
Com'io discerno per lo fioco lume.
Ed egli a me: Le cose ti fien conte,
Quando noi fermerem li nostri passi
Su la trista riviera d'Acheronte.
Allor con gli occhi vergognosi e bassi
Temendo, no 'l mio dir gli fusse grave,
Infino al fiume di parlar mi trassi.
Ed ecco verso noi venir, per nave,
Un vecchio bianco, per antico pelo,
Gridando, Guai à voi anime prave:
Non isperate mai veder lo cielo:
I' vegno, per menarvi all' altra riva
Nelle tenebre eterne, in caldo e'n gielo:
E tu, che se' costì, anima viva,
Partiti da cotesti, che son morti:
Ma poi ch' e' vide, ch' i' non mi partiva,
Disse: Per altre vie, per altri porti
Verrai a piaggia, non qui, per passare:
Più lieve legno convien, che ti porti.
E'l duca a lui: Caron, non ti crucciare:
Vuolsi così colà, dove si puote
Ciò che si vuole, e più non dimandare.
Quinci fur quete le lanose gote
Al nocchier della livida palude,
Che 'ntorno agli occhi ave' di fiamme ruote.

Ma

Vile forms! ne'er honor'd with exiſtence true!
Naked they march'd, and ſorely were they ſtung
By waſps and hornets, that around them flew;
Theſe the black blood from their gall'd faces wrung;
Blood mixt with tears, that, trickling to their feet,
Fed the faſtidious worms which round them clung.
When now I farther pierc'd the dark retreat,
Numbers I ſaw beſide a mighty ſtream:
Sudden I cry'd—Now, Sire, let me entreat
To know what forms in diſtant proſpect ſeem
To paſs ſo ſwiftly o'er a flood ſo wide,
As I diſcern by this imperfect gleam?—
That ſhalt thou know (return'd my gracious Guide)
When the near reſpite from our toil we reach,
On ſullen Acheron's infernal tide.—
With downcaſt eyes, that pardon now beſeech,
And hoping ſilence may that pardon win,
E'en to the river I abſtain'd from ſpeech.
And lo! towards us, with a ſhrivell'd ſkin,
A hoary boatman ſteers his crazy bark,
Exclaiming, "Woe to all ye ſons of ſin!
Hope not for heaven, nor light's celeſtial ſpark!
I come to waft you to a different lot;
To Torture's realm, with endleſs horror dark:
And thou, who living view'ſt this ſacred ſpot,
Haſte to depart from theſe, for theſe are dead!"
But when he ſaw that I departed not,
In wrath he cry'd, "Thro' other paſſes led,
Not here, ſhalt thou attempt the farther ſhore;
But in a bark to bear thy firmer tread."—
O Charon, ſaid my Guide, thy ſtrife give o'er;
For thus 'tis will'd in that ſuperior ſcene
Where will is power. Seek thou to know no more!—
Now grew the bearded viſage more ſerene
Of the ſtern boatman on the livid lake,
Whoſe eyes ſo lately glar'd with anger keen:

Ma quell' anime, ch'eran laſſe e nude,
Cangiar colore, e dibattero i denti,
Ratto che 'nteſer le parole crude.
Beſtemmiavano Iddio, e i lor parenti,
L'umana ſpezie, il luogo, il tempo, e'l ſeme,
Di lor ſemenza, e di lor naſcimenti.
Poi ſi ritraſſer tutte quante inſieme
Forte piangendo, alla riva malvagia,
Ch'attende ciaſcun'uom, che Dio non teme.
Caron dimonio, con occhi di bragia,
Loro accennando, tutte le raccoglie:
Batte col remo, qualunque s'adagia.
Come d' Autunno ſi levan le foglie,
L' una appreſſo dell' altra, infin che 'l ramo
Rende alla terra tutte le ſue ſpoglie;
Similemente il mal ſeme d' Adamo:
Gittanſi di quel lito ad una ad una,
Per cenni, com' augel, per ſuo richiamo.
Così ſen vanno ſu per l'onda bruna,
E avanti che ſien di là diſceſe,
Anche di qua nova ſchiera s'aduna.
Figliuol mio, diſſe il maeſtro corteſe,
Quelli, che muojon nell' ira di Dio,
Tutti convegnon qui d' ogni paeſe:
E pronti ſono al trapaſſar del rio,
Che la divina giuſtizia gli ſprona,
Sì che la tema ſi volge in diſio.
Quinci non paſſa mai anima buona:
E però ſe Caron di te ſi lagna,
Ben puoi ſaper omai, che'l ſuo dir ſuona.
Finito queſto la buja campagna
Tremò sì forte, che dello ſpavento
La mente di ſudore ancor mi bagna.
La terra lagrimoſa diede vento,
Che balenò una luce vermiglia,
La qual mi vinſe ciaſcun ſentimento:
E caddi, come l' uom, cui ſonno piglia.

But all the naked ſhades began to quake;
Their ſhuddering figures grew more pale than earth,
Soon as they heard the cruel words he ſpake:
God they blaſphem'd, their parents' injur'd worth,
And all mankind; the place, the hour, that ſaw
Their firſt formation, and their future birth.
Then were they driven, by Fate's reſiſtleſs law,
Weeping, to that ſad ſcene prepar'd for all
Who fear not God with pure devotion's awe.
Charon, with eyes of fire and words of gall,
Collects his crew, and high his oar he wields,
To ſtrike the tardy wretch who ſlights his call.
As leaves in autumn thro' the woody fields
Fly in ſucceſſion, when each trembling tree
Its ling'ring honors to the whirlwind yields;
So this bad race, condemn'd by Heaven's decree,
Succeſſive haſten from that river's ſide:
As birds, which at a call to bondage flee,
So are they wafted o'er the gloomy tide;
And ere from thence their journey is begun,
A ſecond crew awaits their hoary guide.—
My gracious Maſter kindly ſaid—My ſon!
All thoſe who in the wrath of God expire,
From every clime haſte hither, one by one;
Nor would their terrors from this ſtream retire,
Since heavenly juſtice ſo impels their mind,
That fear is quicken'd into keen deſire.
Here may no ſpirit paſs, to good inclin'd;
And hence, if Charon ſeem'd to thwart thy will,
Hence wilt thou deem his purpoſe not unkind.—
He paus'd; and horrors of approaching ill
Now made the mournful troop ſo ſtand aghaſt,
Their fears yet ſtrike me with a deadly chill!
The groaning earth ſent forth a hollow blaſt,
And flaſh'd a fiery glare of gloomy red!
The horrid ſcene my fainting power ſurpaſt:
I fell, and, as in ſleep, my ſenſes fled.

NOTE V. VERSE 127.

The gay Boccacio, tempts th' Italian Muse.] Boccacio was almost utterly unknown to our country as a Poet, when two of our most accomplished Critics restored his poetical reputation.

Mr. Tyrwhitt, to whom Chaucer is as deeply indebted as a Poet can be to the judgment and erudition of his commentator, has given a sketch of Boccacio's Theseida, in his introductory discourse to the Canterbury Tales; and Mr. Warton has enriched the first volume of his History of English Poetry with a considerable specimen of this very rare Italian Epic poem, of which our country is said to possess but a single copy.—The father of Boccacio was an Italian merchant, a native of Certaldo, near Florence, who in his travels attached himself to a young woman of Paris; and our Poet is supposed to have been the illegitimate offspring of that connection. He was born in 1313, and educated as a student of the canon law; but a sight of Virgil's tomb, according to Filippo Villani, his most ancient Biographer, made him resolve to relinquish his more irksome pursuits, and devote himself entirely to the Muses. His life seems to have been divided between literature and love, as he was equally remarkable for an amorous disposition, and a passionate attachment to study. His most celebrated mistress was Mary of Arragon, the natural daughter of Robert, King of Naples, the generous and enthusiastic patron of Petrarch. To this lady, distinguished by the name of The Fiammetta, Boccacio addressed his capital poem, the Theseida; telling her, in an introductory letter, that it contained many allusions to the particular circumstances of their own secret attachment. In his latter days he retired to Certaldo, and died there in the year 1475, of a disorder supposed to have arisen from excessive application. Few authors have rendered more essential service to the republic of letters than Boccacio, as he not only contributed very much to the improvement of his native language, but was particularly instrumental in promoting the revival of ancient learning: a merit which he shared with Petrarch. The tender and generous friendship which subsisted between these two engaging authors, reflects the highest honour on both; and their letters to each other may be ranked among the most interesting productions of that period. Boccacio composed, according

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to Quadrio, no leſs than thirty-four volumes. His Novels are univerſally known: his Poetical Works are as follow: 1. La Theſeida in Ottava Rima. 2. L'Amoroſa Viſione in Terza Rima. 3. Il Filoſtrato in Ottava Rima. 4. Il Ninfale Fieſolano in Ottava Rima.—He piqued himſelf on being the firſt Poet who ſung of martial ſubjects in Italian verſe; and he has been generally ſuppoſed the inventor of the Ottava Rima, the common Heroic meaſure of the Italian Muſe; but Quadrio has ſhewn that it was uſed by preceding writers; and Paſquier, in his Recherches, has quoted two ſtanzas of Thibaud king of Navarre, written in the ſame meaſure, on Blanch queen of France, who died in 1252. The neglect into which the Poems of Boccacio had fallen appears the more ſtriking, as he peculiarly prided himſelf on his poetical character; informing the world, by an inſcription on his tomb, that Poetry was his favourite purſuit—Studium fuit alma Poeſis, are the laſt words of the epitaph which he compoſed for himſelf.

NOTE VI. VERSE 142.

She ſpoke exulting, and Triſſino ſung.] Giovanni Giorgio Triſſino was born of a noble family in Vicenza, 1478: he was particularly diſtinguiſhed by a paſſion for Poetry and Architecture; and one of the very few Poets who have been rich enough to build a palace. This he is ſaid to have done from a deſign of his own, under the direction of the celebrated Palladio. He had the merit of writing the firſt regular tragedy in the Italian language, entitled Sophoniſba; but in his Epic poem he is generally allowed to have failed, though ſome learned Critics (and Gravina amongſt them) have endeavoured to ſupport the credit of that performance. His ſubject was the expulſion of the Goths from Italy by Beliſarius; and his poem conſiſts of twenty-ſeven books, in blank verſe. He addreſſed it to the Emperor Charles the Vth; and profeſſes in his Dedication to have taken Ariſtotle for his preceptor, and Homer for his guide.

The reader will excuſe a trifling anachroniſm, in my naming Triſſino before Arioſto, for poetical reaſons. The Italia Liberata of the former was firſt publiſhed in 1548; the Orlando Furioſo, in 1515. Triſſino died at Rome, 1550; Arioſto at Ferrara, 1533.

NOTE VII. VERSE 194.

Of a poetic Sire the more poetic Son.] The reputation of Torquato Taſſo has almoſt eclipſed that of his father Bernardo, who was himſelf a conſiderable Poet, and left two productions of the Epic kind, L'Amadigi, and Il Floridante: the latter remained unfiniſhed at his death, but was afterwards publiſhed in its imperfect ſtate by his ſon; who has ſpoken of his father's poetry with filial regard, in his different critical works. The Amadigi was written at the requeſt of ſeveral Spaniſh Grandees, in the court of Charles the Vth, and firſt printed in Venice by Giolito, 1560. The curious reader may find an entertaining account of the Author's ideas in compoſing this work, among his Letters, volume the firſt, page 198. I cannot help remarking, that the letter referred to contains a ſimile which Torquato has introduced in the opening of his Jeruſalem Delivered.

The Italians have formed a very pleaſing and valuable work, by collecting the letters of their eminent Painters; which contain much information on points relating to their art. The letters of their Poets, if properly ſelected, might alſo form a few intereſting volumes: as a proof of this, I ſhall inſert a ſhort letter of the younger Taſſo, becauſe it ſeems to have eſcaped the notice of his Biographers, and relates the remarkable circumſtance of his having deliberated on five different ſubjects before he decided in favour of Goffredo:

Al M. Illuſtre Sig. Conte Ferrante Eſtenſe Taſſone.

Io ho ſcritto queſta mattina a V. S. che io deſidero di far due Poemi a mio guſto; e ſebben per elezione non cambierei il ſoggetto che una volta preſi; nondimeno per ſoddisfar il ſignor principe gli do l' elezione di tutti queſti ſoggetti, i quali mi paijono ſovra gli altri atti a ricever la forma eroica.

Eſpedizion di Goffredo, e degli altri principi contra gl' Infedeli, e ritorno. Dove avrò occaſione di lodar le famiglie d' Europa, che io vorrò.

Eſpedizion di Beliſario contra i Goti.

Di Narſete contra i Goti, e diſcorro d' un principe. E in queſti

verei grandissima occasione di lodar le cose di Spagna e d' Italia e di Grecia e l' origine di casa d' Austria.

Espedizion di Carlo il magno contra Lansoni.

Espedizion di Carlo contra i Longobardi. In questi troverei l' origine di tutte le famiglie grandi di Germania, di Francia, e d' Italia, e 'l ritorno d' un principe.

E sebben alcuni di questi soggetti sono stati presi, non importa; perche io cercherei di trattargli neglio, e a gindicio d' Aristotele.

Opere di Torquato Tasso, tom. ix. p. 240.

This letter is the more worthy of notice, as the subject on which Tasso fixed has been called by Voltaire, and perhaps very justly, Le plus grand qu'on ait jamais choisi. Le Tasse l'a traité dignement, adds the lively Critic, with unusual candour; yet in his subsequent remarks he is peculiarly severe on the magic of the Italian Poet. The merits of Tasso are very ably defended against the injustice of French criticism, and particularly that of Boileau and Voltaire, in the well-known Letters on Chivalry and Romance. Indeed the genius of this injured Poet seems at length to triumph in the country where he was most insulted, as the French have lately attempted a poetical version of his Jerusalem.

I enter not into the history of Tasso, or that of his rival Ariosto, because the public has lately received from Mr. Hoole a judicious account of their lives, prefixed to his elegant versions of their respective Poems.

NOTE VIII. VERSE 197.

Shall gay Tassoni want his festive crown.] Alessandro Tassoni, the supposed inventor of the modern Heroi-comic Poetry, was born at Modena, 1565. His family was noble; but his parents dying during his infancy, left him exposed to vexatious law-suits, which absorbed a great part of his patrimony, and rendered him dependant. In 1599 he was engaged as Secretary to Cardinal Ascanio Colonna, whom he attended on an embassy into Spain. He was occasionally dispatched into Italy on the service of that Prelate, and in the course of one of these expeditions wrote his Observations on Petrarch. In 1605 he is supposed

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to have quitted the ſervice of the Cardinal, and to have lived in a ſtate of freedom at Rome, where, in 1607, he became the chief of a literary ſociety, entitled Academia degli Umoriſti. He was afterwards employed in the ſervice of Charles Emanuel, Duke of Savoy; which, after ſuffering many vexations in it, he quitted with a deſign of devoting himſelf to ſtudy and retirement. But this deſign he was induced to relinquiſh, and to ſerve the Cardinal Lodoviſio, nephew of Pope Gregory XV. from whom he received a conſiderable ſtipend. On the death of this patron, in 1632, he was recalled to his native city by Francis the Firſt, Duke of Modena, and obtained an honourable eſtabliſhment in the court of that Prince. Age had now rendered him unable to enjoy his good fortune: his health declined in the year of his return, and he expired in April 1635. His genius was particularly diſpoſed to lively ſatire; and the incidents of his life had a tendency to increaſe that diſpoſition. After having paſſed many vexatious and unprofitable years in the ſervice of the Great, he had his portrait painted, with a fig in his hand; and Muratori ſuppoſes him to have written theſe two lines on the occaſion:

> Dextera cur ficum, quæris, mea geſtet inanem:
> Longi operis merces hæc fuit; aula dedit.

His celebrated Poem, La Secchia rapita, was written, as he has himſelf declared, in 1611; begun in April, and finiſhed in October. It was circulated in MS. received with the utmoſt avidity, and firſt printed at Paris 1622. In a catalogue of the numerous editions of the Secchia, which Muratori has prefixed to his Life of Taſſoni, he includes an Engliſh tranſlation of it, printed 1715.

NOTE IX. Verse 209.

And raſhly judges that her Vega's lyre.] The famous Lope de Vega, frequently called the Shakeſpear of Spain, is perhaps the moſt fertile Poet in the annals of Parnaſſus; and it would be difficult to name any author, ancient or modern, ſo univerſally idolized while living by all ranks of people, and ſo magnificently rewarded by the liberality of the Great. He was the ſon of Felix de Vega and Franciſca Fernandez,

who were both descended from honourable families, and lived in the neighbourhood of Madrid. Our Poet was born in that city, on the 25th of November 1562. He was, according to his own expression, a Poet from his cradle; and, beginning to make verses before he had learned to write, he used to bribe his elder school-fellows with a part of his breakfast, to commit to paper the lines he had composed. Having lost his father while he was still a child, he engaged in a frolic, very natural to a lively boy, and wandered with another lad to various parts of Spain, till, having spent their money, and being conducted before a magistrate at Segovia, for offering to sell a few trinkets, they were sent home again to Madrid. Soon after this adventure, our young Poet was taken under the protection of Geronimo Manrique, Bishop of Avila, and began to distinguish himself by his dramatic compositions, which were received with great applause by the public, though their author had not yet completed his education; for, after this period, he became a member of the university of Alcala, where he devoted himself for four years to the study of philosophy. He was then engaged as Secretary to the Duke of Alva, and wrote his Arcadia in compliment to that patron; who is frequently mentioned in his Occasional Poems. He quitted that employment on his marriage with Isabel de Urbina, a lady (says his friend and biographer Perez de Montalvan) beautiful without artifice, and virtuous without affectation. His domestic happiness was soon interrupted by a painful incident:—Having written some lively verses in ridicule of a person who had taken some injurious freedom with his character, he received a challenge in consequence of his wit; and happening, in the duel which ensued, to give his adversary a dangerous wound, he was obliged to fly from his family, and shelter himself in Valencia. He resided there a considerable time; but connubial affection recalled him to Madrid. His wife died in the year of his return. His affliction on this event led him to relinquish his favourite studies, and embark on board the Armada which was then preparing for the invasion of England. He had a brother who served in that fleet as a lieutenant; and being shot in an engagement with some Dutch vessels, his virtues were celebrated by our afflicted Poet, whose heart was peculiarly alive to every generous affection. After the ill success of the Armada, the disconsolate Lope de Vega returned to Madrid, and became Secretary to the Marquis of

of Malpica, to whom he has addreſſed a grateful Sonnet. From the ſervice of this Patron he paſſed into the houſehold of the Count of Lemos, whom he celebrates as an inimitable Poet. He was once more induced to quit his attendance on the Great, for the more inviting comforts of a married life. His ſecond choice was Juana de Guardio, of noble birth and ſingular beauty. By this lady he had two children; a ſon, who died in his infancy, and a daughter, named Feliciana, who ſurvived her father. The death of his little boy is ſaid to have haſtened that of his wife, whom he had the misfortune to loſe in about ſeven years after his marriage. Having now experienced the precariouſneſs of all human enjoyments, he devoted himſelf to a religious life, and fulfilled all the duties of it with the moſt exemplary piety; ſtill continuing to produce an aſtoniſhing variety of poetical compoſitions. His talents and his virtues procured him many unſolicited honours. Pope Urban the VIIIth ſent him the Croſs of Malta, with the title of Doctor in Divinity, and appointed him to a place of profit in the Apoſtolic Chamber; favours for which he expreſſed his gratitude by dedicating his Corona Tragica (a long poem on the fate of Mary Queen of Scots) to that liberal Pontiff. In his ſeventy-third year he felt the approaches of death, and prepared himſelf for it with the utmoſt compoſure and devotion. His laſt hours were attended by many of his intimate friends, and particularly his chief patron the Duke of Seſſa, whom he made his executor; leaving him the care of his daughter Feliciana, and of his various manuſcripts. The manner in which he took leave of thoſe he loved was moſt tender and affecting. He ſaid to his Diſciple and Biographer, Montalvan, That true fame conſiſted in being good; and that he would willingly exchange all the applauſes he had received, to add a ſingle deed of virtue to the actions of his life. Having given his dying benediction to his daughter, and performed the laſt ceremonies of his religion, he expired on the 25th of Auguſt 1635.

The ſplendor of his funeral was equal to the reſpect paid to him while living.—His magnificent patron, the Duke of Seſſa, invited the chief nobility of the kingdom to attend it. The ceremony was prolonged through the courſe of ſeveral days; and three ſermons in honour of the deceaſed were delivered by three of the moſt celebrated preachers. Theſe

are printed with the works of the Poet, and may be conſidered as curious ſpecimens of the falſe eloquence which prevailed at that time. A volume of encomiaſtic verſes, chiefly Spaniſh, and written by more than a hundred and fifty of the moſt diſtinguiſhed characters in Spain, was publiſhed ſoon after the death of this lamented Bard. To this collection his friend and diſciple Perez de Montalvan prefixed a circumſtantial account of his life and death, which I have chiefly followed in the preceding narrative. An ingenious Traveller, who has lately publiſhed a pleaſing volume of Letters on the Poetry of Spain, has imputed the duel in which Lope de Vega was engaged to the gallantries of his firſt wife; but Montalvan's relation of that adventure clears the honor of the lady, whoſe innocence is ſtill farther ſupported by a poem written in her praiſe by Pedro de Medina Medinilla: it is printed in the works of our Poet, who is introduced in it, under the name of Belardo, celebrating the excellencies and lamenting the loſs of his departed Iſabel.

Of the perſon and manners of Lope de Vega, his friend Montalvan has only given this general account:—that his frame of body was particularly ſtrong, and preſerved by temperance in continued health;—that in converſation he was mild and unaſſuming; courteous to all, and to women peculiarly gallant;—very eager when engaged in the buſineſs of his friends, and ſomewhat careleſs in the management of his own. Of his wealth and charity I ſhall have occaſion to ſpeak in a ſubſequent note. The chief expences in which he indulged himſelf were books and pictures; of the latter, he diſtributed a few as legacies to his intimate friends: to the Duke of Seſſa, a fine portrait of himſelf; and to me, ſays Montalvan, another, painted when he was young, ſurrounded by dogs, monkies, and other monſters, and writing in the midſt of them, without attending to their noiſe.——Of the honours paid to this extraordinary Poet, his Biographer aſſerts that no perſon of eminence viſited Spain without ſeeking his perſonal acquaintance; that men yielded him precedence when they met him in the ſtreets, and women ſaluted him with benedictions when he paſſed under their windows. If ſuch homage can be deſerved by the moſt unwearied application to poetry, Lope de Vega was certainly entitled to it. He declared that he conſtantly wrote five ſheets a day; and his biographers, who have formed a calculation from this account, conclude the number of his verſes to be

no

no leſs than 21,316,000. His country has very lately publiſhed an elegant edition of his poems in 19 quarto volumes; his dramatic works are to be added to this collection, and will probably be ſtill more voluminous. I ſhall ſpeak only of the former.—Among his poems there are ſeveral of the Epic kind; the three following appear to me the moſt remarkable. 1. La Dragontea. 2. La Hermoſura de Angelica. 3. La Jeruſalem Conquiſtada. The Dragontea conſiſts of ten cantos, on the laſt expedition and death of our great naval hero Sir Francis Drake, whom the Poet, from his exceſſive partiality to his country, conſiders as an avaricious pirate, or rather, as he chuſes to call him, a marine Dragon: and it may be ſufficient to obſerve that he has treated him accordingly. The poem on Angelica ſeems to have been written in emulation of Arioſto, and it is founded on a hint in that Poet: it was compoſed in the early part of our Author's life, and contains many compliments to his ſovereign Philip the IId: it conſiſts of 20 cantos, and cloſes with Angelica's being reſtored to her beloved Medoro. In his Jeruſalem Conquiſtada he enters the liſts with Taſſo, whom he mentions in his preface as having ſung the firſt part of the hiſtory which he had choſen for his ſubject. From the great name of Lope de Vega, I had ſome thoughts of preſenting to the reader a ſketch of this his moſt remarkable poem; but as an Epic Poet he appears to me ſo much inferior to Taſſo, and to his countryman and cotemporary Ercilla, that I am unwilling to ſwell theſe extenſive notes by an enlarged deſcription of ſo unſucceſsful a work: the Author has propheſied in the cloſe of it, that, although neglected by his own age, it would be eſteemed by futurity:—a ſingular proof that even the moſt favoured writers are frequently diſpoſed to declaim againſt the period in which they live. If Lope de Vega could think himſelf neglected, what Poet may ever expect to be ſatisfied with popular applauſe?—But to return to his Jeruſalem Conquiſtada. Richard the Second of England, and Alphonſo the Eighth of Caſtile, are the chief heroes of the poem; which contains twenty cantos; and cloſes with the unfortunate return of theſe confederate Kings, and the death of Saladin. It was firſt printed 1609, more than twenty years after the firſt appearance of Taſſo's Jeruſalem.——One of the moſt amiable peculiarities in the character of Lope de Vega, is the extreme liberality with which he commends the merit of his rivals. In his Laurel de Apollo, he celebrates

brates all the eminent Spaniſh and Portugueze Poets; he ſpeaks both of Camoens and Ercilla with the warmeſt applauſe. Among the moſt pleaſing paſſages in this poem is a compliment which he pays to his father, who was, like the father of Taſſo, a Poet of conſiderable talents.

Among the ſmaller pieces of Lope de Vega, there are two particularly curious; a deſcriptive poem on the garden of his patron the Duke of Alva, and a ſonnet in honour of the Invincible Armada: the latter may be conſidered as a complete model of Spaniſh bombaſt: "Go forth and burn the world," ſays the Poet, addreſſing himſelf to that mighty fleet; "my ſighs will furniſh your ſails with a never-failing wind; and my breaſt will ſupply your cannon with inexhauſtible fire."——Perhaps this may be equalled by a Spaniſh character of our Poet, with which I ſhall cloſe my imperfect account of him. It is his friend and biographer Montalvan, who, in the opening of his life, beſtows on him the following titles: El Doctor Frey Lope Felix de Vega Carpio, Portento del Orbe, Gloria de la Nacion, Luſtre de la Patria, Oracula de la Lengua, Centro de la Fama, Aſſumpio de la Invidia, Cuydado de la Fortuna, Fenix de los Siglos, Principe de los Verſos, Orfeo de las Ciencias, Apolo de las Muſas, Horacio de los Poetas, Virgilio de los Epicos, Homero de los Heroycos, Pindaro de los Lyricos, Sofocles de los Tragicos, y Terencio de los Comicos, Unico entre los Mayores, Mayor entre los Grandes, y Grande a todas Luzes, y en todas Materias.

NOTE X. VERSE 239.

The brave Ercilla ſounds, with potent breath,
His Epic trumpet in the fields of death.] Don Alonzo de Ercilla y Zuniga was equally diſtinguiſhed as a Hero and a Poet; but this exalted character, notwithſtanding his double claim to our regard, is almoſt totally unknown in our country, and I ſhall therefore endeavour to give the Engliſh reader the beſt idea that I can, both of his gallant life, and of his ſingular poem.—He was born in Madrid, on the 7th of Auguſt 1533, the third ſon of Fortun Garcia de Ercilla, who, though deſcended from a noble family, purſued the profeſſion of the law, and was ſo remarkable for his talents, that he acquired the appellation of "The ſubtle Spaniard." The mother of our Poet was alſo noble, and from her he inherited his

ſecond

second title, Zuniga: Ercilla was the name of an ancient caſtle in Biſcay, which had been long in the poſſeſſion of his paternal anceſtors. He loſt his father while he was yet an infant, a circumſtance which had great influence on his future life; for his mother was received, after the deceaſe of her huſband, into the houſehold of the Empreſs Iſabella, the wife of Charles the Vth, and had thus an early opportunity of introducing our young Alonzo into the palace. He ſoon obtained an appointment there, in the character of page to the Infant Don Philip, to whoſe ſervice he devoted himſelf with the moſt heroic enthuſiaſm, though Philip was a maſter who little deſerved ſo generous an attachment. At the age of fourteen, he attended that Prince in the ſplendid progreſs which he made, at the deſire of his Imperial father, through the principal cities of the Netherlands, and through parts of Italy and Germany. This ſingular expedition is very circumſtantially recorded in a folio volume, by a Spaniſh hiſtorian named Juan Chriſtoval Calvete de Eſtrella, whoſe work affords a very curious and ſtriking picture of the manners and ceremonies of that martial and romantic age. All the cities which were viſited by the Prince contended with each other in magnificent feſtivity: the brilliant ſeries of literary and warlike pageants which they exhibited, though they anſwered not their deſign of conciliating the affection of the ſullen Philip, might probably awaken the genius of our youthful Poet, and excite his ambition to acquire both poetical and military fame. In 1551, he returned with the Prince into Spain, and continued there for three years; at the end of which he attended his royal maſter to England on his marriage with Queen Mary, which was celebrated at Wincheſter in the ſummer of 1554. At this period Ercilla firſt aſſumed the military character; for his ſovereign received advice, during his reſidence at London, that the martial natives of Aranco, a diſtrict on the coaſt of Chile, had revolted from the Spaniſh government, and diſpatched an experienced officer, named Alderete, who attended him in England, to ſubdue the inſurrection, inveſting him with the command of the rebellious province. Ercilla embarked with Alderete; but that officer dying in his paſſage, our Poet proceeded to Lima. Don Hurtado de Mendoza, who commanded there as Viceroy of Peru, appointed his ſon Don Garcia to ſupply the place of Alderete, and ſent him with a conſiderable force to oppoſe the Arancanians. Ercilla was engaged in this enterprize, and

greatly

greatly diſtinguiſhed himſelf in the obſtinate conteſt which enſued. The noble character of the Barbarians who maintained this unequal ſtruggle, and the many ſplendid feats of valour which this ſcene afforded, led our author to the ſingular deſign of making the war, in which he was himſelf engaged, the ſubject of an Heroic poem; which he entitled "La Araucana," from the name of the country. As many of his own particular adventures may be found in the following ſummary of his work, I ſhall not here enlarge on his military exploits; but proceed to one of the moſt mortifying events of his life, which he briefly mentions in the concluſion of his poem. After paſſing with great honour through many and various perils, he was on the point of ſuffering a diſgraceful death, from the raſh orders of his young and inconſiderate Commander. On his return from an expedition of adventure and diſcovery, to the Spaniſh city of Imperial, he was preſent at a ſcene of public feſtivity diſplayed there, to celebrate the acceſſion of Philip the IId to the crown of Spain; at a kind of tournament, there aroſe an idle diſpute between Ercilla and Don Juan de Pineda, in the heat of which the two diſputants drew their ſwords; many of the ſpectators joined in the broil; and, a report ariſing that the quarrel was a mere pretence, to conceal ſome mutinous deſign, the haſty Don Garcia, their General, committed the two antagoniſts to priſon, and ſentenced them both to be publicly beheaded. Ercilla himſelf declares, he was conducted to the ſcaffold before his precipitate judge diſcovered the iniquity of the ſentence; but his innocence appeared juſt time enough to ſave him; and he ſeems to have been fully reinſtated in the good opinion of Don Garcia, as, among the complimentary ſonnets addreſſed to Ercilla, there is one which bears the name of his General, in which he ſtyles him the Divine Alonzo, and celebrates both his military and poetical genius. But Ercilla ſeems to have been deeply wounded by this affront; for, quitting Chile, he went to Callao, the port of Lima, and there embarked on an expedition againſt a Spaniſh rebel, named Lope de Aguirre, who, having murdered his captain, and uſurped the chief power, was perpetrating the moſt cruel enormities in the ſettlement of Venezuela. But Ercilla learned, on his arrival at Panama, that this barbarous uſurper was deſtroyed; he therefore reſolved, as his health was much impaired by the hardſhips he had paſſed, to return to Spain. He arrived there in the twenty-

ninth year of his age; but ſoon left it, and travelled, as he himſelf informs us, through France, Italy, Germany, Sileſia, Moravia, and Pannonia; but the particulars of this expedition are unknown. In the year 1570 he appeared again at Madrid, and was married to Maria Baẑan, a lady whom he contrives to celebrate in the courſe of his military poem. He is ſaid to have been afterwards gentleman of the bed-chamber to the Emperor Rodolph the IId, a prince who had been educated at Madrid; but the connection of our Poet with this Monarch is very indiſtinctly recorded; and indeed all the latter part of his life is little known. In the year 1580 he reſided at Madrid, in a ſtate of retirement and poverty. The time and circumſtances of his death are uncertain: it is proved that he was living in the year 1596, by the evidence of a Spaniſh writer named Moſquera, who, in a treatiſe of military diſcipline, ſpeaks of Ercilla as engaged at that time in celebrating the victories of Don Alvaro Bazan, Marques de Santa Cruz, in a poem which has never appeared, and is ſuppoſed to have been left imperfect at his death. Some anecdotes related of our Poet afford us ground to hope that his various merits were not entirely unrewarded. It is ſaid, that in ſpeaking to his ſovereign Philip, he was ſo overwhelmed by diffidence that language failed him: "Don Alonzo! (replied the King) ſpeak to me in writing."—He did ſo, and obtained his requeſt. The Spaniſh Hiſtorian Ovalle, who has written an account of Chile, in which he frequently ſupports his narration by the authority of Ercilla, affirms that our Poet preſented his work to Philip with his own hand, and received a recompence from the King. But in this circumſtance I fear the Hiſtorian was miſtaken, as he ſuppoſes it to have happened on the return of Ercilla from Chile; and our Poet, in a diſtinct portion of his work, which was not publiſhed till many years after that period, expreſsly declares, in addreſſing himſelf to Philip, that all his attempts to ſerve him had been utterly unrequited. Ercilla left no legitimate family; but had ſome natural children, the moſt eminent of which was a daughter, who was advantageouſly married to a nobleman of Portugal.

In that elegant collection of Spaniſh Poets, "*Parnaſo Eſpañol,*" there is a pleaſing little amorous poem, written by Ercilla in his youth, which is peculiarly commended by Lope de Vega; who has beſtowed a very generous encomium on our Poet, in his "*Laurel de Apolo.*" But the great

and singular work which has justly rendered Ercilla immortal, is his Poem entitled Araucana, which was published in three separate parts: the first appeared in 1577; he added the second in the succeeding year; and in 1590 he printed a complete edition of the whole. It was applauded by the most eminent writers of Spain; and Cervantes, in speaking of Don Quixote's Library, has ranked it among the choicest treasures of the Castilian Muse. Voltaire, who speaks of Ercilla with his usual spirit and inaccuracy, has the merit of having made our Poet more generally known, though his own acquaintance with him appears to have been extremely slight; for he affirms that Ercilla was in the battle of Saint Quintin: a mistake into which he never could have fallen, had he read the Araucana. Indeed the undistinguishing censure which he passes on the poem in general, after commending one particular passage, sufficiently proves him a perfect stranger to many subsequent parts of the work; yet his remark on the inequality of the Poet is just. Ercilla is certainly unequal; but, with all his defects, he appears to me one of the most extraordinary and engaging characters in the poetical world. Perhaps I am a little partial to him, from the accidental circumstance of having first read his poem with a departed friend, whose opinions are very dear to me, and who was particularly fond of this military Bard. However this may be, my idea of Ercilla's merit has led me to hazard the following extensive sketch of his Work: — it has swelled to a much larger size than I at first intended; for I was continually tempted to extend it, by the desire of not injuring the peculiar excellencies of this wonderful Poet. If I have not utterly failed in that desire, the English reader will be enabled to judge, and to enjoy an author, who, considering his subject and its execution, may be said to stand single and unparalleled in the host of Poets. His beauties and his defects are of so obvious a nature, that I shall not enlarge upon them; but let it be remembered, that his poem was composed amidst the toils and perils of the most fatiguing and hazardous service, and that his verses were sometimes written on scraps of leather, from the want of better materials. His style is remarkably pure and perspicuous, and, notwithstanding the restraint of rhyme, it has frequently all the ease, the spirit, and the volubility of Homer. I wish not, however, to conceal his defects; and I have therefore given a very fair account of the strange episode he intro-

duces concerning the hiſtory of Dido, which has juſtly fallen under the ridicule of Voltaire. I muſt however obſerve, as an apology for Ercilla, that many Bards of his country have conſidered it as a point of honour to defend the reputation of this injured lady, and to attack Virgil with a kind of poetical Quixotiſm for having ſlandered the chaſtity of ſo ſpotleſs a heroine. If my memory does not deceive me, both Lope de Vega and Quevedo have employed their pens as the champions of Dido. We may indeed very readily join the laugh of the lively Frenchman againſt

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SONETO

DE LA SEÑORA DOÑA LEONOR DE ICIZ, SEÑORA DE LA BARONIA DE RAFÀLES A DON ALONSO DE ERCILLA.

Mil bronces para eſtatuas ya forxados,
Mil lauros de tus obras premio honroſo
Te ofrece Eſpaña, Ercilla generoſo,
Por tu pluma y tu lanza tan ganados.
Houreſe tu valor entre ſoldados,
Invidie tu nobleza el valeroſo,
Y buſque en tí el poeta mas famoſo
Lima para ſus verſos mas limados.
Derrame por el mundo tus loores
La fama, y eternice tu memoria,
Porque jamás el tiempo la conſuma.
Gocen ya, ſin temor de que hay mayores
Tus hechos, y tus libros de igual gloria,
Pues la han ganado igual la eſpada y pluma.

against our Poet on this occasion; but let us recollect that Ercilla has infinitely more Homeric spirit, and that his poem contains more genuine Epic beauties, than can be found in Voltaire.

Ercilla has been honoured with many poetical encomiums by the writers of his own country; and, as I believe the most elegant compliment which has been paid to his genius is the production of a Spanish lady, I shall close this account of him with a translation of the Sonnet, in which she celebrates both the Hero and the Poet.

SONNET

FROM THE LADY LEONORA DE ICIZ, BARONESS OF RAFALES, TO DON ALONZO DE ERCILLA.

Marble, that forms the Hero's mimic frame,
And laurels, that reward the Poet's strain,
Accept, Ercilla, from thy grateful Spain!
Thy sword and pen alike this tribute claim.
Our Warriors honor thy heroic name;
Thy birth is envy'd by Ambition's train;
Thy verses teach the Bard of happiest vein
A finer polish, and a nobler aim.
May glory round the world thy merit spread!
In Memory's volume may thy praises stand
In characters that time shall ne'er destroy!
Thy songs, and thy exploits, without the dread
To be surpass'd by a superior hand,
With equal right their equal fame enjoy!

A SKETCH

A SKETCH OF THE ARAUCANA.

THE Poem of Ercilla opens with the following exposition of his subject:

I Sing not love of ladies, nor of fights
Devis'd for gentle dames by courteous knights,
Nor feasts, nor tourneys, nor that tender care
Which prompts the Gallant to regale the Fair;
But the bold deeds of Valor's fav'rite train,
Those undegenerate sons of warlike Spain,
Who made Arauco their stern laws embrace,
And bent beneath their yoke her untam'd race.
Of tribes distinguish'd in the field I sing;
Of nations who disdain the name of King;
Courage, that danger only taught to grow,
And challenge honour from a generous foe;
And persevering toils of purest fame,
And feats that aggrandize the Spanish name:
For the brave actions of the vanquish'd spread
The brightest glory round the victor's head.

He then addresses his work to his sovereign, Philip the Second, and devotes his first Canto to the description of that part of the new world which forms the scene of his action, and is called Arauco; a district in the province of Chile. He paints the singular character and various customs of its warlike inhabitants with great clearness and spirit. In many points they bear a striking resemblance to the ancient Germans, as they are drawn with a kind of poetical energy by the strong pencil of Tacitus. The first Canto closes with a brief account how this martial province was subdued by a Spanish officer named Valdivia; with an intimation

intimation that his negligence in his new dominion gave birth to thoſe important exploits which the Poet propoſes to celebrate.

CANTO II.

ERCILLA begins his Cantos much in the manner of Arioſto, with a moral reflection; ſometimes rather too much dilated, but generally expreſſed in eaſy, elegant, and ſpirited verſe.—The following lines faintly imitate the two firſt ſtanzas of his ſecond Canto:

Many there are who, in this mortal ſtriſe,
Have reach'd the ſlippery heights of ſplendid life:
For Fortune's ready hand its ſuccour lent;
Smiling ſhe rais'd them up the ſteep aſcent,
To hurl them headlong from that lofty ſeat
To which ſhe led their unſuſpecting feet;
E'en at the moment when all fears diſperſe,
And their proud fancy ſees no ſad reverſe.
Little they think, beguil'd by fair ſucceſs,
That Joy is but the herald of Diſtreſs:
The haſty wing of time eſcapes their ſight,
And thoſe dark evils that attend his flight:
Vainly they dream, with gay preſumption warm,
Fortune for them will take a ſteadier form;
She, unconcern'd at what her victims feel,
Turns with her wonted haſte her fatal wheel.

After blaming his countrymen for abuſing their good fortune, the Poet celebrates, in the following ſpirited manner, the eagerneſs and indignation with which the Indians prepared to wreak their vengeance on their Spaniſh oppreſſors:

The Indians firſt, by novelty diſmay'd,
As Gods rever'd us, and as Gods obey'd;
But when they found we were of woman born,
Their homage turn'd to enmity and ſcorn:

Their childish error, when our weakness show'd,
They blush'd at what their ignorance bestow'd;
Fiercely they burnt, with anger and with shame,
To see their masters but of mortal frame.
Disdaining cold and cowardly delay,
They seek atonement, on no distant day:
Prompt and resolv'd, in quick debate they join,
To form of deep revenge their dire design.
Impatient that their bold decree should spread,
And shake the world around with sudden dread,
Th' assembling Chieftains led so large a train,
Their ready host o'erspread th' extensive plain.
No summons now the soldier's heart requires;
The thirst of battle every breast inspires;
No pay, no promise of reward, they ask,
Keen to accomplish their spontaneous task;
And, by the force of one avenging blow,
Crush and annihilate their foreign foe.
Of some brave Chiefs, who to this council came,
Well may'st thou, Memory, preserve the name;
Tho' rude and savage, yet of noble soul,
Justly they claim their place on Glory's roll,
Who robbing Spain of many a gallant son,
In so confin'd a space such victories won;
Whose fame some living Spaniards yet may spread,
Too well attested by our warlike dead.

The Poet proceeds to mention, in the manner of Homer, but in a much shorter catalogue, the principal chieftains, and the number of their respective vassals.

Uncouthly as their names must sound to an English ear, it seems necessary to run through the list, as these free and noble-minded savages act so distinguished a part in the course of the poem.—Tucapel stands first; renowned for the most inveterate enmity to the Christians, and leader of three thousand vassals: Angol, a valiant youth, attended by four thousand: Cayocupil, with three; and Millarapue, an elder chief, with

with five thousand: Paycabi, with three thousand; and Lemolemo, with six: Maregnano, Gualèmo, and Lebopia, with three thousand each: Elicura, distinguished by strength of body and detestation of servitude, with six thousand; and the ancient Colocolo with a superior number: Ongolmo, with four thousand; and Puren, with six; the fierce and gigantic Lincoza with a still larger train. Peteguelen, lord of the valley of Arauco, prevented from personal attendance by the Christians, dispatches six thousand of his retainers to the assembly: the most distinguished of his party are Thomè and Andalican. The Lord of the maritime province of Pilmayquen, the bold Caupolican, is also unable to appear at the opening of the council. Many other Chieftains attended, whose names the Poet suppresses, lest his prolixity should offend. As they begin their business in the style of the ancient Germans, with a plentiful banquet, they soon grow exasperated with liquor, and a violent quarrel ensues concerning the command of the forces for the projected war: an honour which almost every chieftain was arrogant enough to challenge for himself. In the midst of this turbulent debate, the ancient Colocolo delivers the following harangue, which Voltaire prefers (and I think with great justice) to the speech of Nestor, on a similar occasion, in the first Iliad.

Assembled Chiefs! ye guardians of the land!
Think not I mourn from thirst of lost command,
To find your rival spirits thus pursue
A post of honour which I deem my due.
These marks of age, you see, such thoughts disown
In me, departing for the world unknown;
But my warm love, which ye have long possest,
Now prompts that counsel which you'll find the best.
Why should we now for marks of glory jar?
Why wish to spread our martial name afar?
Crush'd as we are by Fortune's cruel stroke,
And bent beneath an ignominious yoke,
Ill can our minds such noble pride maintain,
While the fierce Spaniard holds our galling chain.
Your generous fury here ye vainly shew;
Ah! rather pour it on th' embattled foe!

What frenzy has your ſouls of ſenſe bereav'd?
Ye ruſh to ſelf-perdition, unperceiv'd.
'Gainſt your own vitals would ye lift thoſe hands,
Whoſe vigor ought to burſt oppreſſion's bands?
If a deſire of death this rage create,
O die not yet in this diſgraceful ſtate!
Turn your keen arms, and this indignant flame,
Againſt the breaſt of thoſe who ſink your fame,
Who made the world a witneſs of your ſhame.
Haſte ye to caſt theſe hated bonds away,
In this the vigor of your ſouls diſplay;
Nor blindly laviſh, from your country's veins,
Blood that may yet redeem her from her chains.
E'en while I thus lament, I ſtill admire
The fervor of your ſouls; they give me fire:
But, juſtly trembling at their fatal bent,
I dread ſome dire calamitous event;
Leſt in your rage Diſſention's frantic hand
Should cut the ſinews of our native land.
If ſuch its doom, my thread of being burſt,
And let your old compeer expire the firſt!
Shall this ſhrunk frame, thus bow'd by age's weight,
Live the weak witneſs of a nation's fate?
No: let ſome friendly ſword, with kind relief,
Forbid its ſinking in that ſcene of grief.
Happy whoſe eyes in timely darkneſs cloſe,
Sav'd from that worſt of ſights, his country's woes!
Yet, while I can, I make your weal my care,
And for the public good my thoughts declare.
Equal ye are in courage and in worth;
Heaven has aſſign'd to all an equal birth:
In wealth, in power, and majeſty of ſoul,
Each Chief ſeems worthy of the world's controul.
Theſe gracious gifts, not gratefully beheld,
To this dire ſtrife your daring minds impell'd.
But on your generous valor I depend,
That all our country's woes will ſwiftly end.

A Leader

A Leader ſtill our preſent ſtate demands,
To guide to vengeance our impatient bands;
Fit for this hardy taſk that Chief I deem,
Who longeſt may ſuſtain a maſſive beam:
Your rank is equal, let your force be try'd,
And for the ſtrongeſt let his ſtrength decide.

The Chieftains acquieſce in this propoſal; which, as Voltaire juſtly obſerves, is very natural in a nation of ſavages. The beam is produced, and of a ſize ſo enormous, that the Poet declares himſelf afraid to ſpecify its weight. The firſt Chieftains who engage in the trial ſupport it on their ſhoulders five and ſix hours each; Tucapel fourteen; and Lincoza more than double that number; when the aſſembly, conſidering his ſtrength as almoſt ſupernatural, is eager to beſtow on him the title of General; but in the moment he is exulting in this new honour, Caupolican arrives without attendants. His perſon and character are thus deſcribed by the Poet:

Tho' from his birth one darken'd eye he drew
(The viewleſs orb was of the granate's hue)
Nature, who partly robb'd him of his ſight,
Repaid this failure by redoubled might.
This noble youth was of the higheſt ſtate;
His actions honour'd, and his words of weight:
Prompt and reſolv'd in every generous cauſe,
A friend to Juſtice and her ſterneſt laws:
Faſhion'd for ſudden feats, or toils of length,
His limbs poſſeſs'd both ſuppleneſs and ſtrength:
Dauntleſs his mind, determin'd and adroit
In every quick and hazardous exploit.

This accompliſhed Chieftain is received with great joy by the aſſembly; and, having ſurpaſſed Lincoza by many degrees in the trial, is inveſted with the ſupreme command. He diſpatches a ſmall party to attack a neighbouring Spaniſh fort: they execute his orders, and make

a vigorous aſſault. After a ſharp conflict they are repulſed; but in the moment of their retreat Caupolican arrives with his army to their ſupport. The Spaniards in deſpair evacuate the fort, and make their eſcape in the night: the news is brought to Valdivia, the Spaniſh Commander in the city of Conception;—and with his reſolution to puniſh the Barbarians the canto concludes.

CANTO III.

O CURELESS malady! Oh fatal peſt!
Embrac'd with ardor and with pride careſt;
Thou common vice, thou moſt contagious ill,
Bane of the mind, and frenzy of the will!
Thou foe to private and to public health;
Thou dropſy of the ſoul, that thirſts for wealth,
Inſatiate Avarice!—'tis from thee we trace
The various miſery of our mortal race.

With this ſpirited and generous invective againſt that prevailing vice of his countrymen, which ſullied the luſtre of their moſt brilliant exploits, Ercilla opens his 3d canto. He does not ſcruple to aſſert, that the enmity of the Indians aroſe from the avaricious ſeverity of their Spaniſh oppreſſors; and he accuſes Valdivia on this head, though he gives him the praiſe of a brave and gallant officer. —— This Spaniard, on the firſt intelligence of the Indian inſurrection, diſpatched his ſcouts from the city where he commanded. They do not return. Preſſed by the impatient gallantry of his troops, Valdivia marches out:—they ſoon diſcover the mangled heads of his meſſengers fixed up as a ſpectacle of terror on the road. Valdivia deliberates what meaſures to purſue. His army entreat him to continue his march. He conſents, being piqued by their inſinuations of his diſgracing the Spaniſh arms. An Indian ally brings him an account that twenty thouſand of the confederated Indians are waiting to deſtroy him in the valley of Tucapel. He ſtill preſſes forward; arrives

rives in ſight of the fort which the Indians had deſtroyed, and engages them in a moſt obſtinate battle; in the deſcription of which, the Poet introduces an original and ſtriking ſimile, in the following manner:

The ſteady pikemen of the ſavage band,
Waiting our haſty charge, in order ſtand;
But when th' advancing Spaniard aim'd his ſtroke,
Their ranks, to form a hollow ſquare, they broke;
An eaſy paſſage to our troop they leave,
And deep within their lines their foes receive;
Their files reſuming then the ground they gave,
Bury the Chriſtians in that cloſing grave.
As the keen Crocodile, who loves to lay
His ſilent ambuſh for his finny prey,
Hearing the ſcaly tribe with ſportive ſound
Advance, and caſt a muddy darkneſs round,
Opens his mighty mouth, with caution, wide,
And, when th' unwary fiſh within it glide,
Cloſing with eager haſte his hollow jaw,
Thus ſatiates with their lives his rav'nous maw:
So, in their toils, without one warning thought,
The murd'rous foe our little ſquadron caught
With quick deſtruction, in a fatal ſtrife,
From whence no Chriſtian ſoldier 'ſcap'd with life.

Such was the fate of the advanced guard of the Spaniards. The Poet then deſcribes the conflict of the main army with great ſpirit:—ten Spaniards diſtinguiſh themſelves by ſignal acts of courage, but are all cut in pieces. The battle proceeds thus:

The hoſtile ſword, now deeply dy'd in blood,
Drench'd the wide field with many a ſanguine flood;
Courage ſtill grows to form the fierce attack,
But waſted vigor makes the combat ſlack:
No pauſe they ſeek, to gain exhauſted breath,
No reſt, except the final reſt of death:

The

The warieſt combatants now only try
To ſnatch the ſweets of vengeance ere they die.
The fierce diſdain of death, and ſcorn of flight,
Give to our ſcanty troop ſuch wond'rous might,
The Araucanian hoſt begin to yield;
They quit with loſs and ſhame the long-fought field:
They fly; and their purſuers ſhake the plain
With joyous ſhouts of Victory and Spain.
But dire miſchance, and Fate's reſiſtleſs ſway,
Gave a ſtrange iſſue to the dreadful day.
An Indian Youth, a noble Chieftain's ſon,
Who as our friend his martial feats begun,
Our Leader's Page, by him to battle train'd,
Who now beſide him the hard fight ſuſtain'd,
As he beheld his kindred Chiefs retire,
Felt an indignant flaſh of patriot fire;
And thus incited to a glorious ſtand
The flying champions of his native land:
Miſguided Country, by vain fear poſſeſt,
Ah whither doſt thou turn thy timid breaſt?
Ye brave compatriots, ſhall your ancient fame
Be vilely buried in this field of ſhame?
Thoſe laws, thoſe rights, ye gloried to defend,
All periſh, all by this ignoble end?
From Chiefs of dreaded power, and honor'd worth,
Ye ſink to abject ſlaves, the ſcorn of earth!
To the pure founders of your boaſted race
Ye give the cureleſs wound of deep diſgrace!
Behold the waſted vigor of your foe!
See, bath'd in ſweat and blood, their courſers blow!
Loſe not your mental force, your martial fires,
Our beſt inheritance from generous ſires;
Sink not the noble Araucanian name,
From glory's ſummit to the depths of ſhame;
Fly, fly the ſervitude your ſouls deteſt!
To the keen ſword oppoſe the dauntleſs breaſt.

Why

Why ſhew ye frames endued with manly power,
Yet ſhrink from danger in the trying hour?
Fix in your minds the friendly truth I ſpeak;
Vain are your fears, your terror blind and weak:
Now make your names immortal; now reſtore
Freedom's loſt bleſſings to your native ſhore:
Now turn, while Fame and Victory invite,
While proſp'rous Fortune calls you to the fight;
Or yet a moment ceaſe, O ceaſe to fly,
And for our country learn of me to die!
As thus he ſpeaks, his eager ſteps advance,
And 'gainſt the Spaniſh Chief he points his lance;
To lead his kindred fugitives from flight,
Singly he dares to tempt th' unequal fight:
Againſt our circling arms, that round him ſhine,
Eager he darts amidſt the thickeſt line,
Keen as, when chaf'd by ſummer's fiery beam,
The young Stag plunges in the cooling ſtream.

The Poet proceeds to relate the great agility and valor diſplayed by Lantaro, for ſuch is the name of this gallant and patriotic Youth: and, as Ercilla has a ſoul ſufficiently heroic to do full juſtice to the virtues of an enemy, he gives him the higheſt praiſe. Having mentioned on the occaſion many heroes of ancient hiſtory, he exclaims:

Say, of theſe famous Chiefs can one exceed
Or match this young Barbarian's noble deed?
Vict'ry for them, her purpoſe unexplor'd,
Tempted by equal chance their happy ſword:
What riſk, what peril did they boldly meet,
Save where Ambition urg'd the ſplendid feat;
Or mightier Int'reſt fir'd the daring mind,
Which makes a Hero of the fearful Hind?
Many there are who with a brave diſdain
Face all the perils of the deathful plain,

Who, fir'd by hopes of glory, nobly dare,
Yet fail the ſtroke of adverſe chance to bear;
With animated fire their ſpirit ſhines,
Till the ſhort ſplendor of their day declines;
But all their valor, all their ſtrength expires,
When fickle Fortune from their ſide retires.
This youthful Hero, when the die was caſt,
War's dire decree againſt his country paſt,
Made the ſtern Power the finiſh'd cauſe reſume,
And finally reverſe the cruel doom:
He, by his efforts in the dread debate,
Forc'd the determin'd will of adverſe Fate,
From ſhouting Triumph ruſh'd the palm to tear,
And fix'd it on the brow of faint Deſpair.

Caupolican, leading his army back to the charge, in conſequence of Lantaro's efforts in their favour, obtains a complete victory. The Spaniards are all ſlain in the field, except their Commander Valdivia, who flies, attended only by a prieſt; but he is ſoon taken priſoner, and conducted before the Indian Chief, who is inclined to ſpare his life; when an elder ſavage, called Leocato, in a ſudden burſt of indignation, kills him with his club.

All the people of Arauco aſſemble in a great plain to celebrate their victory: old and young, women and children, unite in the feſtival; and the trees that ſurround the ſcene of their aſſembly are decorated with the heads and ſpoils of their ſlaughtered enemies.

They meditate the total extermination of the Spaniards from their country, and even a deſcent on Spain. The General makes a prudent ſpeech to reſtrain their impetuoſity; and afterwards, beſtowing juſt applauſe on the brave exploit of the young Lantaro, appoints him his lieutenant. In the midſt of the feſtivity, Caupolican receives advice that a party of fourteen Spaniſh horſemen had attacked ſome of his forces with great havoc. He diſpatches Lantaro to oppoſe them.

CANTO IV.

A PARTY of fourteen gallant Spaniards, who had ſet forth from the city of Imperial to join Valdivia, not being apprized of his unhappy fate, are ſurprized by the enemy where they expected to meet their Commander;—they defend themſelves with great valor. They are informed by a friendly Indian of the fate of Valdivia. They attempt to retreat; but are ſurrounded by numbers of the Araucanians:—when the Poet introduces the following inſtance of Spaniſh heroiſm, which I inſert as a curious ſtroke of their military character:

Here, cried a Spaniard, far unlike his race,
Nor ſhall his abject name my verſe debaſe,
Marking his few aſſociates march along,
O that our band were but a hundred ſtrong!
The brave Gonſalo with diſdain replied:
Rather let two be ſever'd from our ſide,
Kind Heaven! that Memory may our feats proclaim
And call our little troop The Twelve of Fame!

They continue to fight with great bravery againſt ſuperior numbers, when Lautaro arrives with a freſh army againſt them. Still undaunted, they only reſolve to ſell their lives as dear as poſſible. Seven of them are cut to pieces.—In the midſt of the ſlaughter a furious thunder and hail ſtorm ariſes, by which incident the ſurviving ſeven eſcape. The tempeſt is deſcribed with the following original ſimile:

Now in the turbid air a ſtormy cloud
Spreads its terrific ſhadow o'er the crowd;
The gathering darkneſs hides the ſolar ray,
And to th' affrighted earth denies the day;
The ruſhing winds, to which the foreſts yield,
Rive the tall tree, and deſolate the field:

In drops diſtinct and rare now falls the rain;
And now with thickening fury beats the plain.
As the bold maſter of the martial drum,
Ere to the ſhock th' advancing armies come,
In awful notes, that ſhake the heaven's high arch,
Intrepid ſtrikes the ſlow and ſolemn march;
But, when the charging heroes yield their breath,
Doubles the horrid harmony of death:
So the dark tempeſt, with encreaſing ſound,
Pours the loud deluge on the echoing ground.

The few Spaniards that eſcape take refuge in a neighbouring fort; which they abandon the following day on hearing the fate of Valdivia. Lantaro returns, and receives new honors and new forces from his General, to march againſt a Spaniſh army, which departs from the city of Penco under the command of Villagran, an experienced officer, to revenge the death of Valdivia. The departure of the troops from Penco is deſcribed, and the diſtreſs of the women.—Villagran marches with expedition towards the frontiers of Arauco. He arrives at a dangerous paſs, and finds Lantaro, with his army of 10,100 Indians, advantageouſly poſted on the heights, and waiting with great ſteadineſs and diſcipline to give him battle.

CANTO V.

LANTARO with great difficulty reſtrains the eager Indians in their poſt on the rock. He ſuffers a few to deſcend and ſkirmiſh on the lower ground, where ſeveral diſtinguiſh themſelves in ſingle combat. The Spaniards attempt in vain to diſlodge the army of Lantaro by an attack of their cavalry:—they afterwards fire on them from ſix pieces of cannon.

The vext air feels the thunder of the fight,
And ſmoke and flame involve the mountain's height;

Earth ſeems to open as the flames aſpire,
And new volcano's ſpout deſtructive fire.
  Lantaro ſaw no hopes of life allow'd,
Save by diſperſing this terrific cloud,
That pours its lightning with ſo dire a ſhock,
Smiting his leſſen'd hoſt, who ſtrew the rock;
And to the troop of Leucoton the brave
His quick command the ſkilful Leader gave:
He bids them fiercely to the charge deſcend,
And thus exhorts aloud each ardent friend:
  My faithful partners in bright victory's meed,
Whom fortune ſummons to this noble deed,
Behold the hour when your prevailing might
Shall prove that Juſtice guards us in the fight!
Now firmly fix your lances in the reſt,
And ruſh to honor o'er each hoſtile breaſt;
Through every bar your bloody paſſage force,
Nor let a brother's fall impede your courſe;
Be yon dread inſtruments of death your aim;
Poſſeſt of theſe you gain eternal fame:
The camp ſhall follow your triumphant trace,
And own you leaders in the glorious chace.
  While theſe bold words their ardent zeal exalt,
They ruſh impetuous to the raſh aſſault.

The Indians, undiſmayed by a dreadful ſlaughter, gain poſſeſſion of the cannon.—Villagran makes a ſhort but ſpirited harangue to his flying ſoldiers. He is unable to rally them: and, chuſing rather to die than to ſurvive ſo ignominious a defeat, ruſhes into the thickeſt of the enemy:—when the Poet, leaving his fate uncertain, concludes the canto.

 CANTO

CANTO VI.

THE valiant mind is privileg'd to feel
Superior to each turn of Fortune's wheel;
Chance has no power its value to debaſe,
Or brand it with the mark of deep diſgrace:
So thought the noble Villagran, our Chief,
Who choſe that death ſhould end his preſent grief,
And ſmooth the horrid path, with thorns o'erſpread,
Which Deſtiny condemn'd his feet to tread.

With the preceding encomium on the ſpirit of this unfortunate officer the Poet opens his 6th Canto. Thirteen of the moſt faithful ſoldiers of Villagran, perceiving their Leader fallen motionleſs under the fury of his enemies, make a deſperate effort to preſerve him.—Being placed again on his horſe by theſe generous deliverers, he recovers from the blow which had ſtunned him; and by ſingular exertion, with the aſſiſtance of his ſpirited little troop, effects his eſcape, and rejoins his main army; whom he endeavours in vain to lead back againſt the triumphant Araucanians. The purſuit becomes general, and the Poet deſcribes the horrid maſſacre committed by the Indians on all the unhappy fugitives that fell into their hands.—The Spaniards in their flight are ſtopt by a narrow paſs fortified and guarded by a party of Indians. Villagran forces the rude entrenchment in perſon, and conducts part of his army ſafe through the paſs; but many attempting other roads over the mountainous country, are either loſt among the precipices of the rocks, or purſued and killed by the Indians.

CANTO VII.

THE remains of the Spaniſh army, after infinite loſs and fatigue, at laſt reach the city of Concepcion.

Their entrance in theſe walls let fancy paint,
O'erwhelm'd with anguiſh, and with labor faint:

These

These gash'd with ghastly wounds, those writh'd with pain,
And some their human semblance scarce retain;
They seem unhappy spirits 'scap'd from hell,
Yet wanting voice their misery to tell.
Their pangs to all their rolling eyes express,
And silence most declares their deep distress.
When weariness and shame at length allow'd
Their tongues to satisfy th' enquiring crowd,
From the pale citizens, amaz'd to hear
A tale surpassing e'en their wildest fear,
One general sound of lamentation rose,
That deeply solemniz'd a nation's woes;
The neighbouring mansions to their grief reply,
And every wall return'd the mournful cry.

The inhabitants of Concepcion, expecting every instant the triumphant Lantaro at their gates, resolve to abandon their city. A gallant veteran upbraids their cowardly design. They disregard his reproaches, and evacuate the place:—when the Poet introduces the following instance of female heroism:

'Tis just that Fame a noble deed display,
Which claims remembrance, even to the day
When Memory's hand no more the pen shall use,
But sink in darkness and her being lose:
The lovely Mencia, an accomplish'd Dame,
A valiant spirit in a tender frame,
Here firmly shew'd, as this dread scene began,
Courage now found not in the heart of man.
The bed of sickness 'twas her chance to press;
But when she heard the city's loud distress,
Snatching such weapons as the time allow'd,
She rush'd indignant midst the flying crowd.
Now up the neighbouring hill they slowly wind,
And, bending oft their mournful eyes behind,

Cast

Caſt a ſad look, of every hope bereft,
On thoſe rich plains, the precious home they left.
More poignant grief ſee generous Mencia feel,
More noble proof ſhe gives of patriot zeal:
Waving a ſword in her heroic hand,
In their tame march ſhe ſtopt the timid band;
Croſs'd the aſcending road before their van,
And, turning to the city, thus began:
Thou valiant nation, whoſe unequall'd toils
Have dearly purchas'd fame and golden ſpoils,
Where is the courage ye ſo oft diſplay'd
Againſt this foe, from whom ye ſhrink diſmay'd?
Where thoſe high hopes, and that aſpiring flame,
Which made immortal praiſe your conſtant aim?
Where your firm ſouls, that every chance defied,
And native ſtrength, that form'd your noble pride?
Ah whither would you fly, in ſelfiſh fear,
In frantic haſte, with no purſuer near?
How oft has cenſure to your hearts aſſign'd
Ardor too keenly brave and raſhly blind;
Eager to dart amid the doubtful fray,
Scorning the uſeful aid of wiſe delay?
Have we not ſeen you with contempt oppoſe,
And bend beneath your yoke unnumber'd foes;
Attempt and execute deſigns ſo bold,
Ye grew immortal as ye heard them told?
Turn! to your people turn a pitying eye,
To whom your fears theſe happy ſeats deny!
Turn! and ſurvey this fair, this fertile land,
Whoſe ready tribute waits your lordly hand;
Survey its pregnant mines, its ſands of gold;
Survey the flock now wandering from its fold,
Mark how it vainly ſeeks, in wild deſpair,
The faithleſs ſhepherd, who forſakes his care.
E'en the dumb creatures, of domeſtic kind,
Though not endow'd with man's diſcerning mind,

Now ſhew the ſemblance of a reaſoning ſoul,
And in their maſters miſery condole:
The ſtronger animals, of ſterner heart,
Take in this public woe a feeling part;
Their plaintive roar, that ſpeaks their ſenſe aright,
Juſtly upbraids your ignominious flight.
Ye fly from quiet, opulence, and fame,
Purchas'd by valor, your acknowledg'd claim;
From theſe ye fly, to ſeek a foreign ſeat,
Where daſtard fugitives no welcome meet.
How deep the ſhame, an abject life to ſpend
In poor dependance on a pitying friend!
Turn! let the brave their only choice await,
Or honourable life, or inſtant fate.
Return! return! O quit this path of ſhame!
Stain not by fear your yet unſullied name;
Myſelf I offer, if our foes advance,
To ruſh the foremoſt on the hoſtile lance;
My actions then ſhall with my words agree,
And what a woman dares your eyes ſhall ſee.
Return! return! ſhe cried; but cried in vain;
Her fire ſeem'd frenzy to the coward train.

The daſtardly inhabitants of the city, unmoved by this remonſtrance of the noble Donna Mencia de Nidos, continue their precipitate flight, and, after twelve days of confuſion and fatigue, reach the city of Santiago, in the valley of Mapocho. Lantaro arrives in the mean time before the walls they had deſerted:—and the Poet concludes his canto with a ſpirited deſcription of the barbaric fury with which the Indians entered the abandoned city, and deſtroyed by fire the rich and magnificent manſions of their Spaniſh oppreſſors.

CANTO VIII.

LANTARO is recalled from his victorious exploits, to aſſiſt at a general aſſembly of the Indians, in the valley of Arauco. The different Chieftains deliver their various ſentiments concerning the war, after their Leader Caupolican has declared his deſign to purſue the Spaniards with unceaſing vengeance. The veteran Colocolo propoſes a plan for their military operations. An ancient Augur, named Puchecalco, denounces ruin on all the projects of his countrymen, in the name of the Indian Dæmon Eponamon. He recites the omens of their deſtruction. The fierce Tucapel, provoked to frenzy by this gloomy prophet, ſtrikes him dead in the midſt of his harangue, by a ſudden blow of his mace. Caupolican orders the murderous Chieftain to be led to inſtant death. He defends himſelf with ſucceſs againſt numbers who attempt to ſeize him. Lantaro, pleaſed by this exertion of his wonderful force and valour, intreats the General to forgive what had paſſed; and, at his interceſſion, Tucapel is received into favour. Lantaro then cloſes the buſineſs of the aſſembly, by recommending the plan propoſed by Colocolo, and intreating that he may himſelf be entruſted with a detached party of five hundred Indians, with which he engages to reduce the city of Santiago. His propoſal is accepted. The Chieftains, having finiſhed their debate, declare their reſolutions to their people; and, after their uſual feſtivity, Caupolican, with the main army, proceeds to attack the city of Imperial.

CANTO IX.

THE Poet opens this Canto with an apology for a miracle, which he thinks it neceſſary to relate, as it was atteſted by the whole Indian army; and, though it does not afford him any very uncommon or ſub-

lime

lime imagery, he embelliſhes the wonder he deſcribes, by his eaſy and ſpirited verſification, of which the following lines are an imperfect copy:

When to the city's weak defenceleſs wall
Its foes were ruſhing, at their trumpet's call,
The air grew troubled with portentous ſound,
And mournful omens multiplied around;
With furious ſhock the elements engage,
And all the winds contend in all their rage.
  From claſhing clouds their mingled torrents guſh,
And rain and hail with rival fury ruſh.
Bolts of loud thunder, floods of lightning rend
The opening ſkies, and into earth deſcend.
  O'er the vaſt army equal terrors ſpread;
No mind eſcapes the univerſal dread;
No breaſt, tho' arm'd with adamantine power,
Holds its firm vigor in this horrid hour;
For now the fierce Eponamon appears,
And in a Dragon's form augments their fears;
Involving flames around the Dæmon ſwell,
Who ſpeaks his mandate in a hideous yell:
He bids his votaries with haſte inveſt
The trembling city, by deſpair depreſt.
Where'er th' invading ſquadrons force their way,
He promiſes their arms an eaſy prey.
Spare not (he cry'd) in the relentleſs ſtrife,
One Spaniſh battlement, one Chriſtian life!
He ſpoke, and, while the hoſt his will adore,
Melts into vapour, and is ſeen no more.
  Quick as he vaniſh'd Nature's ſtruggles ceaſe;
The troubled elements are ſooth'd to peace:
The winds no longer rage with boundleſs ire,
But, huſh'd in ſilence, to their caves retire:
The clouds diſperſe, reſtoring as they fly
The unobſtructed ſun and azure ſky:

Fear only held its place, and ſtill poſſeſt
Uſurp'd dominion o'er the boldeſt breaſt.
The tempeſt ceas'd, and heaven, ſerenely bright,
Array'd the moiſten'd earth in joyous light:
When, pois'd upon a cloud that ſwiftly flew,
A Female form deſcended to their view,
Clad in the radiance of ſo rich a veil,
As made the ſun's meridian luſtre pale;
For it outſhone his golden orb as far
As his full blaze outſhines the twinkling ſtar.
Her ſacred features baniſh all their dread,
And o'er the hoſt reviving comfort ſhed.
An hoary Elder by her ſide appear'd,
For age and ſanctity of life rever'd;
And thus ſhe ſpoke, with ſoft perſuaſive grace:
Ah! whither ruſh ye, blind devoted race?
Turn, while you can, towards your native plain,
Nor 'gainſt yon city point your arms in vain;
For God will guard his faithful Chriſtian band,
And give them empire o'er your bleeding land,
Since, thankleſs, falſe, and obſtinate in ill,
You ſcorn ſubmiſſion to his ſacred will.
Yet ſhun thoſe walls; th' Almighty, there ador'd,
There arms his people with Deſtruction's ſword.
So ſpoke the Viſion, with an angel's tongue,
And thro' the ſpacious air to heaven ſhe ſprung.

The Indians, confounded by this miraculous interpoſition, diſperſe in diſorder to their ſeveral homes; and the Poet proceeds very gravely to affirm, that, having obtained the beſt information, from many individuals, concerning this miracle, that he might be very exact in his account of it, he finds it happened on the twenty-third of April, four years before he wrote the verſes that deſcribe it, and in the year of our Lord 1554. The Viſion was followed by peſtilence and famine among the Indians. They remain inactive during the winter, but aſſemble again the enſuing ſpring in the plains of Arauco, to renew the war.

They

They receive intelligence that the Spaniards are attempting to rebuild the city of Concepcion, and are requested by the neighbouring tribes to march to their assistance, and prevent that design. Lantaro leads a chosen band on that expedition, hoping to surprize the fort the Spaniards had erected on the ruins of their city; but the Spanish commander, Alvarado, being apprized of their motion, sallies forth to meet the Indian party: a skirmish ensues; the Spaniards retire to their fort; Lantaro attempts to storm it; a most bloody encounter ensues; Tucapel signalizes himself in the attack; the Indians persevere with the most obstinate valour, and, after a long conflict (described with a considerable portion of Homeric spirit) gain possession of the fort; Alvarado and a few of his followers escape; they are pursued, and much galled in their flight: a single Indian, named Rengo, harrasses Alvarado and two of his attendants; the Spanish officer, provoked by the insult, turns with his two companions to punish their pursuer; but the wily Indian secures himself on some rocky heights, and annoys them with his sling, till, despairing of revenge, they continue their flight.

CANTO X.

THE Indians celebrate their victory with public games; and prizes are appointed for such as excel in their various martial exercises. Leucoton is declared victor in the contest of throwing the lance, and receives a scimitar as his reward. Rengo subdues his two rivals, Cayeguan and Talco, in the exercise of wrestling, and proceeds to contend with Leucoton. After a long and severe struggle, Rengo has the misfortune to fall by an accidental failure of the ground, but, springing lightly up, engages his adversary with increasing fury; and the canto ends without deciding the contest.

CANTO XI.

LANTARO separates the two enraged antagonists, to prevent the ill effects of their wrath. The youth Orompello, whom Leucoton had before surpassed in the contest of the lance, challenges his successful rival to wrestle: they engage, and fall together: the victory is disputed. Tucapel demands the prize for his young friend Orompello, and insults the General Caupolican. The latter is restrained from avenging the insult, by the sage advice of the veteran Colocolo, at whose request he distributes prizes of equal value to each of the claimants. To prevent farther animosities, they relinquish the rest of the appointed games, and enter into debate on the war. Lantaro is again appointed to the command of a chosen troop, and marches towards the city of St. Jago. The Spaniards, alarmed at the report of his approach, send out some forces to reconnoitre his party: a skirmish ensues: they are driven back to the city, and relate that Lantaro is fortifying a strong post at some distance, intending soon to attack the city. Villagran, the Spaniard who commanded there, being confined by illness, appoints an officer of his own name to sally forth, with all the forces he can raise, in quest of the enemy. The Spaniards fix their camp, on the approach of night, near the fort of Lantaro: they are suddenly alarmed, and summoned to arms; but the alarm is occasioned only by a single horse without a rider, which Lantaro, aware of their approach, had turned loose towards their camp, as an insulting mode of proclaiming his late victory, in which he had taken ten of the Spanish horses.

The Spaniards pass the night under arms, resolving to attack the Indians at break of day. Lantaro had issued orders that no Indian should sally from the fort under pain of death, to prevent the advantage which the Spanish cavalry must have over his small forces in the open plain. He also commanded his soldiers to retreat with an appearance of dismay, at the first attack on the fort, and suffer a considerable number of the enemy to enter the place. This stratagem succeeds: the Spaniards rush forward with great fury: the Indians give ground, but,

ſoon turning with redoubled violence on thoſe who had paſſed their lines, deſtroy many, and oblige the reſt to ſave themſelves by a precipitate flight. The Indians, forgetting the orders of their Leader, in the ardour of vengeance ſally forth in purſuit of their flying enemy. Lantaro recalls them by the ſound of a military horn, which he blows with the utmoſt violence. They return, but dare not appear in the preſence of their offended Commander. He iſſues new reſtrictions; and then, ſummoning his ſoldiers together, addreſſes them, in a ſpirited, yet calm and affectionate harangue, on the neceſſity of martial obedience. While he is yet ſpeaking, the Spaniards return to the attack, but are again repulſed with great loſs. They retreat, and encamp at the foot of a mountain, unmoleſted by any purſuers.

CANTO XII.

THE Spaniards remain in their camp, while two of their adventurous ſoldiers engage to return once more to the fort, and examine the ſtate of it. On their approach, one of them, called Marcos Vaez, is ſaluted by his name, and promiſed ſecurity, by a voice from within the walls. Lantaro had formerly lived with him on terms of friendſhip, and now invites him into the fort. The Indian Chief harangues on the reſolution and the power of his countrymen to exterminate the Spaniards, unleſs they ſubmit. He propoſes, however, terms of accommodation to his old friend Marcos, and ſpecifies the tribute he ſhould expect. The Spaniard anſwers with diſdain, that the only tribute the Indians would receive from his countrymen would be torture and death. Lantaro replies, with great temper, that arms, and the valour of the reſpective nations, muſt determine this point; and proceeds to entertain his gueſt with a diſplay of ſix Indians, whom he had mounted and trained to exerciſe on Spaniſh horſes. The Spaniard challenges the whole party: Lantaro will not allow him to engage in any conflict, but diſmiſſes him in peace. He recalls him, before he had proceeded far from the fort, and, telling him that his ſoldiers were much diſtreſſed by the want of proviſion, entreats him to ſend a ſupply, affirming it to be true

heroiſm

heroiſm to relieve an enemy from the neceſſities of famine. The Spaniard ſubſcribes to the ſentiment, and engages, if poſſible, to comply with the requeſt. Returning to his camp, he acquaints his Commander Villagran with all that had paſſed; who, ſuſpecting ſome dangerous deſign from Lantaro, decamps haſtily in the night to regain the city. The Indian Chief is ſeverely mortified by their departure, as he had formed a project for cutting off their retreat, by letting large currents of water into the marſhy ground on which the Spaniards were encamped. Deſpairing of being able to ſucceed againſt their city, now prepared to reſiſt him, he returns towards Arauco, moſt ſorely galled by his diſappointment, and thus venting his anguiſh:

What can redeem Lantaro's wounded name?
What plea preſerve his failing arms from ſhame?
Did not my ardent ſoul this taſk demand,
Which now upbraids my unperforming hand?
On me, on me alone can cenſure fall;
Myſelf th' adviſer and the guide of all.
Am I the Chief who, in Fame's bright career,
Aſk'd to ſubdue the globe a ſingle year?
While, at the head of this my glittering train,
I weakly threaten Spaniſh walls in vain,
Thrice has pale Cynthia, with repleniſh'd ray,
Seen my ill-order'd troop in looſe array;
And the rich chariot of the blazing ſun
Has from the Scorpion to Aquarius run.
At laſt, as fugitives theſe paths we tread,
And mourn twice fifty brave companions dead.
Could Fate's kind hand this hateful ſtain efface,
Could death redeem me from this worſe diſgrace,
My uſeleſs ſpear ſhould pierce this abject heart,
Which has ſo ill ſuſtain'd a ſoldier's part.
Unworthy thought! the mean ignoble blow
Would only tempt my proud and vaunting foe
To boaſt that I preferr'd, in fear's alarm,
My own weak weapon to his ſtronger arm.

By

By Hell I ſwear, who rules the ſanguine ſtrife,
If Chance allow me yet a year of life,
I'll chaſe theſe foreign lords from Chile's ſtrand,
And Spaniſh blood ſhall ſaturate our land.
No changing ſeaſon, neither cold nor heat,
Shall make the firmer ſtep of War retreat;
Nor ſhall the earth, nor hell's expanding cave,
From this avenging arm one Spaniard ſave.
Now the brave Chief, with ſolemn ardor, ſwore
To his dear native home to turn no more;
From no fierce ſun, no ſtormy winds to fly,
But patiently abide the varying ſky,
And ſpurn all thoughts of pleaſure and of eaſe,
Till reſcu'd fame his tortur'd ſoul appeaſe;
Till earth confeſs the brave Lantaro's hand
Has clos'd the glorious work his ſpirit plann'd.
In theſe reſolves the Hero found relief,
And thus relax'd the o'erſtrain'd cord of grief;
Whoſe preſſure gall'd him with ſuch mental pain,
That frenzy almoſt ſeiz'd his burning brain.

Lantaro continues his march into an Indian diſtrict, from which he collects a ſmall increaſe of force; and, after addreſſing his ſoldiers concerning the expediency of ſtrict military diſcipline, and the cauſe of their late ill ſucceſs, he turns again towards the city of St. Jago; but, receiving intelligence on his road of its preparations for defence, he again ſuſpends his deſign, and fortifies a poſt, which he chuſes with the hope of collecting ſtill greater numbers to aſſiſt him in his projected enterprize. The Spaniards at St. Jago are eager to ſally in queſt of Lantaro, but their Commander Villagran was abſent on an expedition to the city of Imperial. In returning from thence he paſſes near the poſt of Lantaro. An Indian ally acquaints him with its ſituation, and, at the earneſt requeſt of the Spaniſh officer, agrees to conduct him, by a ſhort though difficult road, over a mountain, to attack the fort by ſurprize. The Poet ſuſpends his narration of this intereſting event, to relate the arrival of new forces from Spain in America; and he now begins

gins to appear himself on the field of action. "Hitherto," says he, "I have described the scenes in which I was not present; yet I have collected my information from no partial witnesses, and I have recorded only those events in which both parties agree. Since it is known that I have shed so much blood in support of what I affirm, my future narration will be more authentic; for I now speak as an ocular witness of every action, unblinded by partiality, which I disdain, and resolved to rob no one of the praise which he deserves."

After pleading his youth as an apology for the defects of his style, and after declaring that his only motive for writing was the ardent desire to preserve so many valiant actions from perishing in oblivion, the Poet proceeds to relate the arrival of the Marquis de Canete as Viceroy in Peru, and the spirited manner in which he corrected the abuses of that country. The canto concludes with reflections on the advantages of loyalty, and the miseries of rebellion.

CANTO XIII.

SPANISH deputies from the province of Chile implore assistance from the new Viceroy of Peru: he sends them a considerable succour, under the conduct of Don Garcia, his son. The Poet is himself of this band, and relates the splendid preparations for the enterprize, and the embarkation of the troops in ten vessels, which sail from Lima towards the coast of Chile. Having described part of this voyage, he returns to the bold exploit of Villagran, and the adventures of Lantaro, the most interesting of all the Araucanian Heroes, whom he left securing himself in his sequestered fort.

A path where watchful centinels were spread,
A single path, to this lone station led:
No other signs of human step were trac'd;
For the vex'd land was desolate and waste.
It chanc'd that night the noble Chieftain prest
His anxious mistress to his gallant breast,

The

The fair Guacolda, for whoſe charms he burn'd,
And whoſe warm heart his faithful love return'd.
That night beheld the warlike ſavage reſt,
Free from th' incumbrance of his martial veſt;
That night alone allow'd his eyes to cloſe
In the deceitful calm of ſhort repoſe:
Sleep preſt upon him like the weight of death;
But ſoon he ſtarts, alarm'd, and gaſps for breath.
The fair Guacolda, with a trembling tongue,
Anxious enquires from whence his anguiſh ſprung.
My lovely Fair! the brave Lantaro cries,
An hideous viſion ſtruck my ſcornful eyes:
Methought that inſtant a fierce Chief of Spain
Mock'd my vain ſpear with inſolent diſdain;
His forceful arm my failing powers o'ercame,
And ſtrength and motion ſeem'd to quit my frame.
But ſtill the vigor of my ſoul I keep,
And its keen anger burſt the bonds of ſleep.
With quick deſpair, the troubled Fair one ſaid,
Alas! thy dreams confirm the ills I dread.
'Tis come—the object of my boding fears!
Thy end, the ſource of my unceaſing tears.
Yet not ſo wretched is this mournful hour,
Nor o'er me, Fortune, canſt thou boaſt ſuch power,
But that kind death may ſhorten all my woes,
And give the agonizing ſcene to cloſe.
Let my ſtern fate its cruel rage employ,
And hurl me from the throne of love and joy;
Whatever pangs its malice may deviſe,
It cannot rend affection's ſtronger ties.
Tho' horrible the blow my fears foreſee,
A ſecond blow will ſet my ſpirit free;
For cold on earth thy frame ſhall ne'er be found,
While mine with uſeleſs being loads the ground.
The Chief, tranſported with her tender charms,
Cloſely around her neck entwin'd his arms;

And, while fond tears her ſnowy breaſt bedew'd,
Thus with redoubled love his ſpeech purſu'd:
My generous Fair, thy gloomy thoughts diſmiſs;
Nor let dark omens interrupt our bliſs,
And cloud theſe moments that with tranſport ſhine,
While my exulting heart thus feels thee mine.
Thy troubled fancy prompts my mutual ſigh;
Not that I think the hour of danger nigh:
But Love ſo melts me with his ſoft controul,
Impoſſibilities alarm my ſoul.
If thy kind wiſhes bid Lantaro live,
Who to this frame the wound of death can give?
Tho' 'gainſt me all the powers of earth combine,
My life is ſubject to no hand but thine.
Who has reſtor'd the Araucanian name,
And rais'd it, ſinking in the depths of ſhame,
When alien lords our nation's ſpirit broke,
And bent its neck beneath a ſervile yoke?
I am the Chief who burſt our galling chain,
And freed my country from oppreſſive Spain;
My name alone, without my ſword's diſplay,
Humbles our foes, and fills them with diſmay.
Theſe happy arms while thy dear beauties fill,
I feel no terror, I foreſee no ill.
Be not by falſe and empty dreams depreſt,
Since truth has nothing to afflict thy breaſt.
Oft have I 'ſcap'd, inur'd to every ſtate,
From many a darker precipice of fate;
Oft in far mightier perils riſk'd my life,
And iſſued glorious from the doubtful ſtrife.
With leſſ'ning confidence, and deeper grief,
Trembling ſhe hung upon the ſoothing Chief,
His lip with ſupplicating ſoftneſs preſt,
And urg'd with many a tear this fond requeſt:
If the pure love, which, prodigal and free,
When freedom moſt was mine, I gave to thee;

If

If truth, which Heaven will witneſs and defend,
Weigh with my ſovereign lord and gentle friend;
By theſe let me adjure thee; by the pain
Which at our parting pierc'd my every vein,
And all the vows, if undiſpers'd in air,
Which then with many a tear I heard thee ſwear;
To this my only wiſh at leaſt agree,
If all thy wiſhes have been laws to me:
Haſte, I entreat thee, arm thyſelf with care,
And bid thy ſoldiers for defence prepare.
The brave Barbarian quick reply'd—'Tis clear
How low my powers are rated by thy fear.
Canſt thou ſo poorly of Lantaro deem?
And is this arm ſo ſunk in thy eſteem?
This arm, which, reſcuing thy native earth,
So prodigally prov'd its valiant worth!
In my try'd courage how complete thy truſt,
Whoſe terror weeps thy living lord as duſt!
In thee, ſhe cries, with confidence moſt pure,
My ſoul is ſatisfy'd, yet not ſecure.
What will thy arm avail in danger's courſe,
If my malignant fate has mightier force?
But let the mis'ry I forebode ariſe;
On this firm thought my conſtant love relies:
The ſword whoſe ſtroke our union may disjoin,
Will teach my faithful ſoul to follow thine.
Since my hard deſtiny, with rage ſevere,
Thus threatens me with all that love can fear;
Since I am doom'd the worſt of ills to ſee,
And loſe all earthly good in loſing thee;
O! ſuffer me to paſs, ere death appears,
The little remnant of my life in tears!
The heart that ſinks not in diſtreſs like this,
Could never feel, could never merit bliſs.
Here from her eyes ſuch floods of ſorrow flow,
Compaſſion weeps in gazing on her woe!

The fond Lantaro, tho' of firmeſt power,
Sheds, as ſhe ſpeaks, a ſympathetic ſhower.
But, to the tender ſcenes of love unus'd,
My artleſs pen, embarraſs'd and confus'd,
From its ſad taſk with diffidence withdraws,
And in its labour aſks a little pauſe.

CANTO XIV.

WHAT erring wretch, to Truth and Beauty blind,
Shall dare to ſatirize the Female kind,
Since pure affection prompts their anxious care,
Their lovely weakneſs, and their fond deſpair?
This fair Barbarian, free from Chriſtian ties,
A noble proof of perfect love ſupplies,
By kindeſt words, and floods of tears that roll
From the clear ſource of her impaſſion'd ſoul.
The chearing ardor of the dauntleſs Chief
Fails to afford her troubled mind relief;
Nor can the ample trench and guarded wall
Preſerve her doubtful heart from fear's enthrall:
Her terrors, ruſhing with love's mighty force,
Level whatever would impede their courſe.
She finds no ſhelter from her cruel doom,
Save the dear refuge of Lantaro's tomb.
Thus their two hearts, where equal paſſion reign'd,
A fond debate with tender ſtriſe maintain'd;
Their differing words alike their love diſplay,
Feed the ſweet poiſon, and augment its ſway.
The ſleepy ſoldiers now their ſtories cloſe,
And ſtretch'd around their ſinking fires repoſe.
The path in front with centinels was lin'd,
And the high mountain was their guard behind;

But o'er that mountain, with advent'rous tread,
Bold Villagran his ſilent forces led.
His haſty march with painful toil he made;
Toil is the price that muſt for fame be paid.
Now near the fort, and halting in its ſight,
He waits the coming aid of clearer light.
The ſtars yet ſhining, but their fires decay,
And now the reddening eaſt proclaims the day.
Th' advancing troop no Indian eye alarms,
For friendly darkneſs hover'd o'er their arms;
And on the quarter where the mountain roſe,
The careleſs guard deſpis'd the thought of foes.
No panting horſe their ſtill approach betray'd;
Propitious Fortune lent the Spaniards aid;
Fortune, who oft bids drowſy Sloth beware,
And lulls to ſleep the watchful eye of Care.
  When Night's obſcure dominion firſt declines,
And glimmering light the duſky air refines,
The weary guards, who round the wall were plac'd,
Hail the new day, and from their ſtation haſte;
Secure of ill, no longer watch they keep,
Quick to forget their nightly toils in ſleep:
Thro' all the fort there reign'd a calm profound;
In wine and ſlumber all its force was drown'd.
  The Spaniſh Chief, who ſaw the fav'ring hour,
Led on by ſlow degrees his ſilent power.
No Indian eyes perceiv'd his near advance;
Fate ſeem'd to bind them in a cruel trance;
Each in ſound ſlumber draws his eaſy breath,
Nor feels his ſlumber will be clos'd by Death.
So blind are mortals to that tyrant's ſway,
They deem him diſtant, while they ſink his prey.
  Our eager ſoldiers now no longer halt,
While kind occaſion prompts the keen aſſault;
A ſhout they raiſe, terrific, loud, and long,
Swell'd by the voice of all the ardent throng;

Whoſe

Whoſe ranks, obedient to their Leader's call,
Ruſh with light ardor o'er th' unguarded wall,
And gain the fort, where Sleep's oppreſſive weight
Expos'd his wretched victims, blind to fate.
As villains, conſcious of their life impure,
Find in their guilty courſe no ſpot ſecure;
For vice is ever doom'd new fears to feel,
And tremble at each turn of Fortune's wheel;
At every noiſe, at each alarm that ſtirs,
Death's penal horror to their mind occurs;
Quick to their arms they fly with wild diſmay,
And ruſh where haſty terror points the way:
So quick the Indians to the tumult came,
With ſleep and valour ſtruggling in their frame.
Unaw'd by danger's unexpected ſight,
They rouſe their fellows, and they ruſh to fight.
Tho' their brave boſoms are of armour bare,
Their manly hearts their martial rage declare.
No furious odds their gallant ſouls appall,
But reſolute they fly to guard the wall.
It was the ſeaſon when, with tender care,
Lantaro reaſon'd with his anxious Fair;
Careſt, conſol'd, and, in his anger kind,
Mildly reprov'd her weak miſtruſting mind.
Spite of his chearing voice ſhe trembles ſtill;
Severer terrors now her boſom fill:
For ſterner ſounds their ſoft debate o'ercome,
Drown'd in the rattle of th' alarming drum.
But not ſo quick, on Apprehenſion's wings,
The wretched miſer from his pillow ſprings,
Whoſe hoarded gold forbids his mind to reſt,
If doubtful noiſe the nightly thief ſuggeſt:
Nor yet ſo haſty, tho' with terror wild,
Flies the fond mother to her wounded child,
Whoſe painful cry her ſhuddering ſoul alarms,
As flew Lantaro at the ſound of arms.

His mantle rapidly around him roll'd,
And, grasping a light sword with hasty hold,
Too eager for his heavier arms to wait,
The fierce Barbarian hurried to the gate.
O faithless Fortune! thou deceitful friend!
Of thy false favours how severe the end!
How quick thou cancell'st, when thy frown appears,
Th' accumulated gifts of long triumphant years!
  To aid the Spaniards in their bold emprize,
Four hundred Indians march'd, their firm allies,
Who on the left their line of battle close,
And haste to combat with their painted bows;
Launching adroitly, in their rapid course,
Unnumber'd arrows with unerring force.
As brave Lantaro issued from his tent,
A shaft to meet the sallying Chief was sent;
Thro' his left side (*ye valiant, mourn his lot!*)
Flew the keen arrow, with such fury shot
It pierc'd his heart, the bravest and the best
That e'er was lodg'd within a human breast.
Proud of the stroke that laid such valor low,
Death seem'd to glory in th' important blow;
And, that no Mortal might his triumph claim,
In darkness hid the doubtful Archer's name.
Such force the keen resistless weapon found,
It stretch'd the mighty Chieftain on the ground,
And gave large outlet to his ardent blood,
That gush'd apace in a tumultuous flood.
From his sunk cheek its native colour fled;
His sightless eyes roll'd in his ghastly head;
His soul, that felt its glorious hopes o'erthrown,
Retir'd, indignant, to the world unknown.

The noble savages, not dismayed by the death of their Leader, continue to defend the fort with great fury.

CANTO XV.

THE Poet opens this canto with a lively panegyric on Love: he affirms that the greatest Poets have derived their glory from their vivid descriptions of this enchanting passion; and he laments that he is precluded by his subject from indulging his imagination in such scenes as are more likely to captivate a reader.

He seems to intend this as an apology (but I must own it is an unsatisfactory one) for deserting the fair Guacolda, whom he mentions no more. He proceeds to describe the sharp contest which the undaunted Indians still maintained in their fort:—they refuse quarter, which is offered them by the Spanish Leader, and all resolutely perish with the brave and beloved Lantaro. The Poet then resumes his account of the naval expedition from Peru to Chile; and concludes the canto with a spirited description of a storm, which attacked the vessels as they arrived in sight of the province to which they were steering.

CANTO XVI.

THE storm abates. The Spaniards land, and fortify themselves on an island near the country of the Araucanians. The latter hold a council of war in the valley of Ongolmo. Caupolican, their General, proposes to attack the Spaniards in their new post. The elder Chieftains dissuade him from the design. A quarrel ensues between Tucapel and the aged Peteguelen:—they are appeased by a speech of the venerable Colocolo; by whose advice a spirited and adroit young Indian, named Millalanco, is dispatched, as a peaceful ambassador, to learn the situation and designs of the Spaniards. He embarks in a large galley with oars, and soon arrives at the island. He surveys the Spanish implements of war with astonishment, and is conducted to the tent of the General, Don Garcia.

CANTO XVII.

THE Indian addresses the Spanish officers with a proposal of peace and amity. He is dismissed with presents. The Chieftains, on his return, pretend to relinquish hostilities; but prepare secretly for war. The Spaniards remain unmolested on the island during the stormy season. They send a select party of a hundred and thirty, including our Poet, to raise a fort on the continent: these execute their commission with infinite dispatch, and all the Spanish troops remove to this new post. The Araucanians are alarmed. An intrepid Youth, named Gracolano, proposes to the Indian General, Caupolican, to storm the fort. The Indians advance near it, under shelter of the night. The Poet describes himself, at this juncture, as oppressed by the excessive labours of the day, and unable to pursue his poetical studies according to his nightly custom: the pen falls from his hand: he is seized with violent pains and tremblings: his strength and senses forsake him: but soon recovering from this infirmity, he enjoys a refreshing sleep. Bellona appears to him in a vision, and encourages him both as a soldier and a poet. She conducts him, through a delicious country, to the summit of a most lofty mountain; when, pointing to a spot below, she informs him it is St. Quintin, and that his countrymen, under the command of their sovereign Philip, are just marching to attack it: she adds, that her presence is necessary in the midst of that important scene; and leaves the Poet on the eminence to survey and record the battle.

CANTO XVIII.

AFTER the Poet has described the success of his royal master at St. Quintin, a female figure of a most venerable appearance, but without a name, relates to him prophetically many future events of great importance to his country. She touches on the disturbances in the Netherlands,

Netherlands, the enterprizes of the Turks, and the exploits of Don John of Auſtria, at that time unknown to fame. Theſe ſhe hints very imperfectly, telling the Poet, that if he wiſhes for farther information, he muſt follow the ſteps of a tame deer, which he will find in a particular ſpot; this animal will lead him to the cell of an ancient hermit, formerly a ſoldier, who will conduct him to the ſecret cave of the unſocial Fiton, a mighty magician, who will diſplay to him the moſt miraculous viſions. His female Inſtructor then adviſes him to mix ſofter ſubjects with the horrors of war, and to turn his eyes and his thoughts to the charms of the many Beauties who then flouriſhed in Spain. He beholds all theſe lovely fair ones aſſembled in a delicious paradiſe; and he is particularly attracted by a young lady, whoſe name he diſcovers to be Donna Maria Bazan (his future wife): in the moment that he begins to queſtion his Guide concerning this engaging Beauty, he is rouſed from his viſion by the ſound of an alarm. He ſnatches up his arms, and hurries to his poſt:—while the morning dawns, and the Indians begin to attack the fort.

CANTO XIX.

THE Indians advance in three ſquadrons. The Youth Gracolano o'erleaps the trench, ſupported on a lofty pike, by which he alſo paſſes the wall. He defends himſelf in the midſt of the Spaniards with great ſpirit; but, finding himſelf unſupported, he wrenches a lance from a Spaniſh ſoldier, and tries to leap once more over the trench; but he is ſtruck by a ſtone while vaulting through the air, and falls, covered, as the Poet expreſsly declares, with two-and-thirty wounds. Some of his friends are ſhot near him; but the Indians get poſſeſſion of the Spaniſh lance with which he had ſprung over the wall, and brandiſh it in triumph. The Spaniard, named Elvira, who had loſt his weapon, piqued by the adventure, ſallies from the fort, and returns, amid the ſhouts of his countrymen, with an Indian ſpear which he won in ſingle combat from a Barbarian, whom he had perceived detached from his

 party.

party. The Indians attempt to ſtorm the fort on every ſide; many are deſtroyed by the Spaniſh fire-arms. The head of the ancient Peteguelen is ſhot off; but Tucapel paſſes the wall, and ruſhes with great ſlaughter into the midſt of the enemy. The Spaniards who were in the ſhips that anchored near the coaſt haſten on ſhore, and march to aſſiſt their countrymen in the fort, but are attacked by a party of Indians in their march. The conflict continues furious on the walls; but the Indians at length retreat, leaving Tucapel ſtill fighting within the fort.

CANTO XX.

TUCAPEL, though ſeverely wounded, eſcapes with life, and rejoins the Indian army, which continues to retreat. The Spaniards ſally from the fort, but ſoon return to it, from the apprehenſion of an ambuſcade. They clear their trench, and ſtrengthen the weaker parts of their fortification. Night comes on. The Poet deſcribes himſelf ſtationed on a little eminence in the plain below the fort, which was ſeated on high and rocky ground:—fatigued with the toils of the day, and oppreſſed by the weight of his armour, which he continues to wear, he is troubled with a lethargic heavineſs; which he counteracts by exerciſe, declaring that his diſpoſition to ſlumber in his poſt aroſe not from any intemperance either in diet or in wine, as mouldy biſcuit and rain-water had been for ſome time his chief ſuſtenance; and that he was accuſtomed to make the moiſt earth his bed, and to divide his time between his poetical and his military labours. He then relates the following nocturnal adventure, which may perhaps be conſidered as the moſt ſtriking and pathetic incident in this ſingular poem:

While thus I ſtrove my nightly watch to keep,
And ſtruggled with th' oppreſſive weight of ſleep,
As my quick feet, with many a ſilent ſtride,
Travers'd th' allotted ground from ſide to ſide,
My eye perceiv'd one quarter of the plain
White with the mingled bodies of the ſlain;

For our inceſſant fire, that bloody day,
Had ſlaughter'd numbers in the ſtubborn fray.
As oft I paus'd each diſtant noiſe to hear,
Gazing around me with attentive ear,
I heard from time to time a feeble ſound
Towards the breathleſs Indians on the ground,
Still cloſing with a ſigh of mournful length;
At every interval it gather'd ſtrength;
And now it ceas'd, and now again begun,
And ſtill from corſe to corſe it ſeem'd to run.
As night's encreaſing ſhade my hope deſtroys,
To view the ſource of this uncertain noiſe,
Eager my mind's unquiet doubts to ſtill,
And more the duties of my poſt fulfil,
With crouching ſteps I haſte, and earneſt eyes,
To the low ſpot from whence the murmurs riſe;
And ſee a duſky Form, that ſeems to tread
Slow, on four feet, among the gory dead.
With terror, that my heart will not deny,
When this ſtrange viſion ſtruck my doubtful eye,
Towards it, with a prayer to Heav'n, I preſt,
Arms in my hand, my corſelet on my breaſt;
But now the duſky Form, on which I ſprung,
Upright aroſe, and ſpoke with plaintive tongue:
Mercy! to mercy hear my juſt pretence;
I am a woman, guiltleſs of offence!
If my diſtreſs, and unexampled plight,
No generous pity in thy breaſt excite;
If thy blood-thirſty rage, by tears uncheck'd,
Would paſs thoſe limits which the brave reſpect;
Will ſuch a deed encreaſe thy martial fame,
When Heaven's juſt voice ſhall to the world proclaim,
That by thy ruthleſs ſword a woman died,
A widow, ſunk in ſorrow's deepeſt tide?
Yet I implore thee, if 'twas haply thine,
Or for thy curſe, as now I feel it mine;

If e'er thy lot, in any ſtate, to prove
How firm the faithful ties of tender love,
O let me bury one brave warrior ſlain,
Whoſe corſe lies blended with this breathleſs train!
Remember, he who thwarts the duteous will
Becomes th' approver and the cauſe of ill.
 Thou wilt not hinder theſe my pious vows;
War, fierceſt war, this juſt demand allows:
The baſeſt tyranny alone is driven
To uſe the utmoſt power that chance has given.
Let but my ſoul its dear companion find,
Then ſate thy fury, if to blood inclin'd;
For in ſuch grief I draw my lingering breath,
Life is my dread, beyond the pangs of death.
There is no ill that now can wound my breaſt,
No good, but what I in my Love poſſeſt:
Fly then, ye hours! that keep me from the dead;
For he, the ſpirit of my life, is fled.
If adverſe Heaven my lateſt wiſh deny,
On his dear corſe to fix my cloſing eye,
My tortur'd ſoul, in cruel Fate's deſpight,
Will ſoar, the faithful partner of his flight.
 And now her agony of heart implor'd
An end of all her ſorrows from my ſword.
Doubt and diſtruſt my troubled mind aſſail,
That fears deceit in her affecting tale;
Nor was I fully of her faith ſecure,
Till oft her words the mournful truth inſure;
Suſpicion whiſper'd, that an artful ſpy
By this illuſion might our ſtate deſcry.
 Howe'er inclin'd to doubt, yet ſoon I knew,
Though night conceal'd her features from my view,
That truth was ſtamp'd on every word ſhe ſaid;
So full of grief, ſo free from guilty dread:
And that bold love, to every danger blind,
Had ſent her forth her ſlaughter'd Lord to find,

Who, in the onset of our bloody ſtrife,
For brave diſtinction ſacrific'd his life.
Fill'd with compaſſion, when I ſaw her bent
To execute her chaſte and fond intent,
I led her weeping to the higher ſpot,
To guard whoſe precincts was that night my lot;
Securely there I begg'd her to relate
The perfect ſtory of her various fate;
From firſt to laſt her touching woes impart,
And by the tale relieve her loaded heart.
Ah! ſhe replied, relief I ne'er can know,
Till Death's kind aid ſhall terminate my woe!
Earth for my ills no remedy ſupplies,
Beyond all ſuff'rance my afflictions riſe:
Yet, though the taſk will agonize my ſoul,
Of my ſad ſtory I will tell the whole;
Grief, thus inforc'd, my life's weak thread may rend,
And in the killing tale my pangs may end.

The fair Indian then relates to Ercilla the particulars of her life, in a ſpeech of conſiderable length:—ſhe informs him, that her name is Tegualda;—that ſhe is the daughter of the Chieftain Brancól;—that her father had often preſſed her to marry, which ſhe had for ſome time declined, though ſolicited by many of the nobleſt Youths in her country; till, being appointed, in compliment to her beauty, to diſtribute the prizes, in a ſcene of public feſtivity, to thoſe who excelled in the manly exerciſes, ſhe was ſtruck by the accompliſhments of a gallant Youth, named Crepino, as ſhe beſtowed on him the reward of his victories;—that ſhe declared her choice to her father, after perceiving the Youth inſpired with a mutual affection for her;—that the old Chieftain was delighted by her chuſing ſo noble a character, and their marriage had been publicly ſolemnized but a month from that day. On this concluſion of her ſtory, ſhe burſts into new agonies of grief, and intreats Ercilla to let her pay her laſt duties to her huſband; or rather, to unite them again in a common grave. Ercilla endeavours to conſole her, by repeated promiſes of all the aſſiſtance in his power. In the moſt paſſionate exceſs of ſorrow, ſhe

ſhe ſtill entreats him to end her miſerable life.—In this diſtreſſing ſcene, our Author is relieved by the arrival of a brother officer, who had been alſo ſtationed on the plain, and now informs Ercilla that the time of their appointed watch is expired. They join in comforting the unhappy Mourner, and conduct her into the fort; where they conſign her, for the remainder of the night, to *the decent care of married women,* to uſe the chaſte expreſſion of the generous and compaſſionate Ercilla.

CANTO XXI.

IN pure affection who has ſoar'd above
The tender pious proof of faithful love,
Which thus awak'd our ſympathetic care
For this unhappy, fond, barbarian Fair?
O that juſt Fame my humble voice would raiſe
To ſwell in loudeſt notes her laſting praiſe!
To ſpread her merits, in immortal rhyme,
Through every language, and through every clime!
With pitying females ſhe the night remain'd,
Where no rude ſtep their privacy profan'd;
Though wretched, thankful for their ſoothing aid,
With hopes her duty would at length be paid.
Soon as the welcome light of morning came,
Though ſoundeſt ſleep had ſeiz'd my jaded frame,
Though my tir'd limbs were ſtill to reſt inclin'd,
Solicitude awak'd my anxious mind.
Quick to my Indian Mourner I repair,
And ſtill in tears I find the reſtleſs Fair;
The varying hours afford her no relief,
No tranſient momentary pauſe of grief.
With trueſt pity I her pangs aſſuage;
To find her ſlaughter'd Lord my word engage;
Reſtore his corſe, and, with a martial band,
Eſcort her ſafely to her native land.

With blended doubt and ſorrow, weeping ſtill,
My promis'd word ſhe pray'd me to fulfil.
Aſſembling now a menial Indian train,
I led her to explore the bloody plain:
Where heaps of mingled dead deform'd the ground,
Near to the fort the breathleſs Chief we found;
Clay-cold and ſtiff, the gory earth he preſt,
A fatal ball had paſs'd his manly breaſt.
Wretched Tegualda, who before her view'd
The pale disfigur'd form, in blood imbru'd,
Sprung forward, and with inſtantaneous force
Frantic ſhe darted on the precious corſe,
And preſs'd his lips, where livid death appears,
And bath'd his wounded boſom in her tears,
And kiſs'd the wound, and the wild hope purſues
That her fond breath may yet new life infuſe.
Wretch that I am! at length ſhe madly cried,
Why does my ſoul theſe agonies abide?
Why do I linger in this mortal ſtrife,
Nor pay to Love his juſt demand, my life?
Why, poor of ſpirit! at a ſingle blow
Do I not cloſe this bitter ſcene of woe?
Whence this delay? will Heaven to me deny
The wretch's choice and privilege, to die?
While, bent on death, in this deſpair ſhe gaſp'd,
Her furious hands her ſnowy neck inclaſp'd;
Failing her frantic wiſh, they do not ſpare
Her mournful viſage nor her flowing hair.
Much as I ſtrove to ſtop her mad intent,
Her fatal purpoſe I could ſcarce prevent:
So loath'd ſhe life, and with ſuch fierce controul
The raging thirſt of death inflam'd her ſoul.
When by my prayers, and ſoft perſuaſion's balm,
Her pangs of ſorrow grew a little calm,
And her mild ſpeech confirm'd my hope, at laſt,
That her delirious agony was paſt,

My

My ready Indian train, with duteous haste,
On a firm bier the clay-cold body plac'd,
And bore the Warrior, in whose fate we griev'd,
To where her vassals the dear charge receiv'd.
But, lest from ruthless War's outrageous sway
The mourning Fair might suffer on her way,
O'er the near mountains, to a safer land,
I march'd to guard her with my warlike band;
And there secure, for the remaining road
Was clear and open to her own abode,
She gratefully declin'd my farther care,
And thank'd and bless'd me in a parting prayer.

As I have been tempted to dwell much longer than I intended on some of the most pathetic incidents of this extraordinary poem, I shall give a more concise summary of the remaining cantos.——On Ercilla's return, the Spaniards continue to strengthen their fort. They receive intelligence from an Indian ally, that the Barbarian army intend a fresh assault in the night. They are relieved from this alarm by the arrival of a large reinforcement from the Spanish cities in Chile:—on which event Colocolo prevails on the Indians to suspend the attack. Caupolican, the Indian General, reviews all his forces; and the various Chieftains are well described. The Spanish Commander, Don Garcia, being now determined to march into the hostile district of Arauco, addresses his soldiers in a spirited harangue, requesting them to remember the pious cause for which they fight, and to spare the life of every Indian who is disposed to submission. They remove from their post, and pass in boats over the broad river Biobio.

CANTO XXII.

THE Spaniards are attacked in their new quarters — a furious battle ensues. The Spaniards are forced to give ground, but at last prevail. The Indian Chief, Rengo, signalizes himself in the action; defends himself in a marsh, and retreats in good order with his forces. The

The Spaniards, after the conflict, ſeize an unhappy ſtraggling Youth, named Galvarino, whom they puniſh as a rebel in the moſt barbarous manner, by cutting off both his hands. The valiant Youth defies their cruelty in the midſt of this horrid ſcene; and, brandiſhing his bloody ſtumps, departs from his oppreſſors with the moſt inſulting menaces of revenge.

CANTO XXIII.

GALVARINO appears in the Aſſembly of the Indian Chieftains, and excites them, in a very animated ſpeech, to revenge the barbarity with which he has been treated. He faints from loſs of blood, in the cloſe of his harangue, but is recovered by the care of his friends, and reſtored to health. The Indians, exaſperated by the ſight of his wounds, unanimouſly determine to proſecute the war. The Spaniards, advancing in Arauco, ſend forth ſcouts to diſcover the diſpoſition of the neighbouring tribes. Ercilla, engaging in this ſervice, perceives an old Indian in a ſequeſtered ſpot, apparently ſinking under the infirmities of age; but, on his approach, the ancient figure flies from him with aſtoniſhing rapidity. He endeavours in vain, though on horſeback, to overtake this aged fugitive, who ſoon eſcapes from his ſight. He now diſcovers the tame Deer foretold in his viſion; and, purſuing it, is conducted through intricate paths to a retired cottage, where a courteous old man receives him in a friendly manner. Ercilla enquires after the Magician Fiton: the old man undertakes to guide him to the ſecret manſion of that wonderful Necromancer, to whom he declares himſelf related. He adds, that he himſelf was once a diſtinguiſhed warrior; but, having the misfortune to ſully his paſt glory, without loſing his life, in a conflict with another Chieftain, he had withdrawn himſelf from ſociety, and lived twenty years as a hermit. He now leads Ercilla through a gloomy grove to the cell of the Magician, whoſe reſidence and magical apparatus are deſcribed with great force of imagination. Fiton appears from a ſecret portal, and proves to be the aged figure who had eſcaped ſo ſwiftly from the ſight of Ercilla. At the requeſt of

his

...ician, the old Warrior, he condescends to shew Ercilla the wonders of his art. He leads him to a large lucid globe, self-suspended in the middle of an immense apartment. He tells him it is the work of forty years study, and contains an exact representation of the world, with this singular power, that it exhibits, at his command, any scene of futurity which he wishes to behold:—that, knowing the heroic composition of Ercilla, he will give him an opportunity to vary and embellish his poem by the description of a most important sea-fight, which he will display to him most distinctly on that sphere. He then invokes all the powers of the infernal world. Ercilla fixes his eye on the globe, and perceives the naval forces of Spain, with those of the Pope and the Venetians, prepared to engage the great armament of the Turks.

CANTO XXIV.

DESCRIBES circumstantially the naval battle of Lepanto, and celebrates the Spanish admiral, Don John of Austria. Ercilla gazes with great delight on this glorious action, and beholds the complete triumph of his countrymen; when the Magician strikes the globe with his wand, and turns the scene into darkness. Ercilla, after being entertained with other marvellous sights, which he omits from his dread of prolixity, takes leave of his two aged friends, and regains his quarters. The Spaniards continue to advance: on their pitching their camp in a new spot, towards evening, an Araucanian, fantastically drest in armour, enquires for the tent of Don Garcia, and is conducted to his presence.

CANTO XXV.

THE Araucanian delivers a defiance to Don Garcia, in the name of Caupolican, who challenges the Spanish General to end the war by a single combat. The messenger adds, that the whole Indian army will descend into the plain, on the next morning, to be spectators of the duel.

duel. Don Garcia diſmiſſes him with an acceptance of the cha[...] At the dawn of day the Indian forces appear in three diviſions. A p[...] of Spaniſh horſe precipitately attack their left wing, before which Caupolican was advancing. They are repulſed. A general and obſtinate engagement enſues. The mangled Galvarino appears at the head of the Indian ſquadron, and excites his countrymen to revenge his wro[...] Many Spaniards are named who diſtinguiſh themſelves in the ba[...] Among the Indian Chiefs Tucapel and Rengo diſplay the moſt ſplendid acts of valour; and, though perſonal enemies, they mutually defend each other. Caupolican alſo, at the head of the left ſquadron, obliges the Spaniards to retreat; and the Araucanians are on the point of gaining a deciſive victory, when the fortune of the day begins to turn.

CANTO XXVI.

THE reſerved guard of the Spaniards, in which Ercilla was ſtationed, advancing to the charge, recover the field, and oblige the main body of the Indians to fly. Caupolican, though victorious in his quarter, ſounds a retreat when he perceives this event. The Indians fly in great diſorder. Rengo for ſome time ſuſtains an unequal conflict, and at laſt retreats ſullenly into a wood, where he collects ſeveral of the ſcattered fugitives. As Ercilla happened to advance towards this ſpot, a Spaniard, called Remon, exhorts him by name to attempt the dangerous but important exploit of forcing this Indian party from the wood. His honour being thus piqued, he ruſhes forward with a few followers, and, after an obſtinate engagement, in which many of the Indians are cut to pieces, the Spaniards obtain the victory, and return to their camp with ſeveral priſoners. After this great defeat of the Indian army, the Spaniards, to deter their enemies from all future reſiſtance, barbarouſly reſolve to execute twelve Chieftains of diſtinction, whom they find among their captives, and to leave their bodies expoſed on the trees that ſurrounded the field of battle. The generous Ercilla, lamenting this inhuman ſentence, intercedes particularly for the life of one, alledging

had ſeen him united with the Spaniards. This perſon proves to Galvarino; who, on hearing the interceſſion for his life, produces his mangled arms, which he had concealed in his boſom, and, giving vent to his deteſtation of the Spaniards, inſiſts on dying with his countrymen. Ercilla perſiſts in vain in his endeavour to ſave him. As no executioner could be found among the Spaniſh ſoldiers, a new mode of deſtruction, ſays our Poet, was invented; and every Indian was ordered to terminate his own life by a cord which was given him. Theſe brave men haſtened to accompliſh their fate with as much alacrity, continues Ercilla, as the moſt ſpirited warrior marches to an attack. One alone of the twelve begins to heſitate, and pray for mercy; declaring himſelf the lineal deſcendant of the moſt ancient race and ſovereign of the country. He is interrupted by the reproaches of the impetuous Galvarino, and, repenting his timidity, atones for it by inſtant death.

The Spaniards advance ſtill farther in the country, and raiſe a fort where Valdivia had periſhed. Ercilla finds his old friend the Magician once more, who tells him that Heaven thought proper to puniſh the pride of the Araucanians by their late defeat; but that the Spaniards would ſoon pay dearly for their preſent triumph. The Wizard retires after this prophecy, and, with much intreaty, allows Ercilla to follow him. Coming to a gloomy rock, he ſtrikes it with his wand; a ſecret door opens, and they enter into a delicious garden, which the Poet commends for its ſymmetry, expreſsly declaring that every hedge *has its brother*. The Magician leads him into a vault of alabaſter; and, perceiving his wiſh, though he does not expreſs it, of ſeeing the miraculous globe again, the courteous Fiton conducts him to it.

CANTO XXVII.

THE Magician diſplays to our Poet the various countries of the globe; particularly pointing out to him the ancient caſtle of Ercilla, the ſeat of his anceſtors in Biſcay, and the ſpot where his ſovereign Philip the Second was ſoon to build his magnificent palace, the Eſcurial. Having ſhewn him the various nations of the earth on his marvellous ſphere, Fiton conducts his gueſt to the road leading to the Spaniſh

Spaniſh camp, where the ſoldiers of Ercilla were ſeeking their The Spaniards in vain attempt to ſooth and to terrify the Arauc into peace; and, finding the importance of their preſent poſt, they de-termine to ſtrengthen it. Ercilla proceeds with a party to the city of Imperial, to provide neceſſaries for this purpoſe. On his return, as he is marching through the country of ſome pacific Indians, he diſcovers, at the cloſe of day, a diſtreſt female, who attempts to fly, but is over-taken by Ercilla.

CANTO XXVIII.

THE fair fugitive, whom our Poet deſcribes as ſingularly beautiful, relates her ſtory. She tells him her name is Glaura, the daughter of an opulent Chieftain, with whom ſhe lived moſt happily, till a brother of her father's, who frequently reſided with him, perſecuted her with an unwarrantable paſſion;—that ſhe in vain repreſented to him the impious nature of his love;—he perſiſted in his frantic attachment, and, on the appearance of a hoſtile party of Spaniards, ruſhed forth to die in her defence, intreating her to receive his departing ſpirit. He fell in the action; her father ſhared the ſame fate: ſhe herſelf eſcaped at a poſtern gate into the woods. Two negroes, laden with ſpoil, diſcovered, and ſeized her. Her cries brought a young Indian, named Cariolano, to her reſcue: he ſhot an arrow into the heart of the firſt ruffian, and ſtabbed the ſecond. Glaura expreſſed her gratitude by receiving her young deliverer as her huſband. Before they could regain a place of ſafety, they were alarmed by the approach of Spaniards. The generous Youth intreated Glaura to conceal herſelf in a tree, while he ventured to meet the enemy. In her terror ſhe ſubmitted to this expedient, which, on recovery from her panic, ſhe bitterly repented; for when ſhe iſſued from her retreat, ſhe ſought in vain for Cariolano, and ſuppoſed, from the clamour ſhe had heard, that he muſt have periſhed. She continued to wander in this wretched ſtate of mind, ſtill unable to hear any tidings of her protector. While the fair Indian thus cloſes her narrative, Ercilla is alarmed by the approach of a large party of Barbarians. One of his faithful Indian attendants, whom he had lately attached to him,

intreats him to escape with the utmost haste; adding, that he can save him from pursuit by his knowledge of the country; and that he will risque his own life most willingly, to preserve that of Ercilla. Glaura bursts into an agony of joy, in discovering her lost Cariolano in this faithful attendant. Ercilla exclaims, "Adieu, my friends; I give you "both your liberty, which is all I have at present to bestow," and rejoins his little troop. Before he enters on the account of what followed, he relates the circumstance by which he attached Cariolano to his service; whom he had found alone, as he himself was marching with a small party, and a few prisoners that he had taken. The Youth at first defended himself, and shot two Spaniards with his arrows, and continued to resist the numbers that pressed upon him, with his mantle and his dagger evading their blows by his extreme agility, and wounding several. Ercilla generously rushed in to his rescue, and declared he deserved a reward for his uncommon bravery, instead of being destroyed so unfairly. The Youth, in consequence of this treatment, flung down his dagger, and became the affectionate attendant of Ercilla. Our Poet, after relating this incident, returns to the scene where his party was surprized in a hollow road, and severely galled by the enemy, who attacked them with showers of stones from the higher ground. Ercilla forces his way up the precipice, and, after dispersing part of the Indian force, effects his escape with a few followers; but all are wounded, and obliged to leave their baggage in the possession of their numerous enemies.

CANTO XXIX.

OPENS with an encomium on the love of our country, and the signal proofs of this virtue which the Araucanians displayed; who, notwithstanding their loss of four great battles in the space of three months, still continue firm in their resolution of defending their liberty. Caupolican proposes, in a public assembly, to set fire to their own habitations, and leave themselves no alternative, but that of killing or being killed. The Chieftains all agree in this desperate determination. Tucapel,

capel, before they proceed to action against the Spaniards, insists on terminating his difference with Rengo, a rival Chieftain, by a single combat. A plain is appointed for this purpose: all the people of Arauco assemble as spectators: the Chiefs appear in complete armour, and engage in a most obstinate and bloody conflict.

CANTO XXX.

AFTER many dreadful wounds on each side, the two Chieftains, closing with each other, fall together, and, after a fruitless struggle for victory, remain speechless on the ground. Caupolican, who presided as judge of the combat, descends from his seat, and, finding some signs of life in each, orders them to be carried to their respective tents. They recover, and are reconciled. The Spaniards, leaving a garrison in their new fort, under a captain named Reynoso, had proceeded to the city of Imperial. Caupolican endeavours to take advantage of this event. He employs an artful Indian, named Pran, to examine the state of the fort. Pran insinuates himself among the Indian servants belonging to the Spaniards. He views the fort, and endeavours to persuade a servile Indian, named Andresillo, to admit Caupolican and his forces while the Spaniards are sleeping. Andresillo promises to meet Caupolican in secret, and converse with him on this project.

CANTO XXXI.

OPENS with a spirited invective against treachery in war, and particularly those traitors who betray their country. Andresillo reveals all that had passed to his Spanish captain; who promises him a great reward if he will assist in making the stratagem of the Indians an instrument of destruction to those who contrived it. They concert a plan for this purpose. Andresillo meets Caupolican in secret, and promises to introduce.

introduce the Indian forces into the fort when the Spaniards are ſleeping, in the heat of the day. Pran is ſent forward, to learn from Andreſillo if all things are quiet, juſt before the hour appointed for the aſſault. He examines the ſtate of the fort, and, finding the Spaniards apparently unprepared for defence, haſtens back to the Indian General, who advances by a quick and ſilent march. The Spaniards in the interim point all their guns, and prepare for the moſt bloody reſiſtance.

CANTO XXXII.

AFTER a panegyric on clemency, and a noble cenſure of thoſe enormous cruelties, by which his countrymen ſullied their military fame, the Poet relates the dreadful carnage which enſued as the Indians approached the fort. The Spaniards, after deſtroying numbers by their artillery, ſend forth a party of horſe, who cut the fugitives to pieces. They inhumanly murder thirteen of their moſt diſtinguiſhed priſoners, by blowing them from the mouths of cannon: but none of the confederate Chieftains, whom the Poet has particularly celebrated, were included in this number; for thoſe high-ſpirited Barbarians had refuſed to attend Caupolican in this aſſault, as they conſidered it as diſgraceful to attack their enemies by ſurprize. The unfortunate Indian Leader, ſeeing his forces thus unexpectedly maſſacred, eſcapes with ten faithful followers, and wanders through the country in the moſt calamitous condition. The Spaniards endeavour, by all the means they can deviſe, to diſcover his retreat: the faithful inhabitants of Arauco refuſe to betray him.

Ercilla, in ſearching the country with a ſmall party, finds a young wounded female. She informs him, that marching with her huſband, ſhe had the misfortune of ſeeing him periſh in the late ſlaughter;—that a friendly ſoldier, in pity to her extreme diſtreſs, had tried to end her miſerable life in the midſt of the confuſion, but had failed in his generous deſign, by giving her an ineffectual wound;—that ſhe had been removed from the field of battle to that ſequeſtered ſpot, where ſhe languiſhed

guished in the hourly hope of death, which she now implores from the hand of Ercilla. Our Poet consoles her; dresses her wound, and leaves one of his attendants to protect her. On his return to the fort, he discourses to his soldiers in praise of the fidelity and spirit displayed by the Indian females, comparing them to the chaste and constant Dido. A young soldier of his train expresses his surprize on hearing Ercilla commend the Carthaginian Queen for a virtue to which, he conceived, she had no pretence. From hence our Poet takes occasion to vindicate the injured Eliza from the slanderous misrepresentation of Virgil; and flatters himself that the love of justice, so natural to man, will induce every reader to listen with pleasure to his defence of the calumniated Queen. He then enters on her *real history*, and relates circumstantially her lamentation over the murdered Sichæus, and the artifice by which she escaped with her treasures from her inhuman brother Pygmalion:—she engages many of his attendants to share the chances of her voyage; and, having collected a supply of females from the island of Cyprus, she directs her course to the coast of Africa.

CANTO XXXIII.

DIDO, as our Poet continues her *more authentic story*, purchases her dominion and raises her flourishing city. The ambassadors of Iarbas arrive at Carthage, to offer this celebrated Queen the alternative of marriage or war. The Senate, who are first informed of the proposal, being fearful that the chaste resolutions of their fair Sovereign may ruin their country, attempt to engage her, by a singular device, to accept the hand of Iarbas. They tell her, that this haughty Monarch has sent to demand twenty of her privy counsellors to regulate his kingdom; and that, in consideration of their age and infirmities, they must decline so unpleasant a service. The Queen represents to them the danger of their refusal, and the duty which they owe to their country; declaring, that she would most readily sacrifice her own life for the safety or advantage of her subjects. The Senators then reveal to her the real demand

demand of Iarbas, and urge the neceſſity of her marriage for the preſervation of the ſtate. The faithful Dido knows not what to reſolve, and demands three months to conſider of this delicate and important point:—at the cloſe of that period, ſhe aſſembles her ſubjects; and, taking leave of them in a very affectionate harangue, declares her reſolution to die, as the only means by which ſhe can at once ſatisfy both Heaven and earth, by diſcharging her duty to her people, and at the ſame time preſerving her faith inviolate to her departed Sichæus. Invoking his name, ſhe plunges a poniard in her breaſt; and throws herſelf on a flaming pile, which had been kindled for a different ſacrifice. Her grateful ſubjects lament her death, and pay divine honours to her memory. "This * (ſays our Poet) is the true and genuine ſtory of the famous defamed Dido, whoſe moſt honoured chaſtity has been belied by the inconſiderate Virgil, to embelliſh his poetical fictions."

Our Poet returns from this digreſſion on Dido, to the fate of the Indian Leader Caupolican.—One of the priſoners, whom the Spaniards had taken in their ſearch after this unfortunate Chief, is at laſt tempted by bribes to betray his General. He conducts the Spaniards to a ſpot near the ſequeſtered retreat of Caupolican, and directs them how to diſcover it; but refuſes to advance with them, overcome by his dread of the Hero whom he is tempted to betray. The Spaniards ſurround the houſe in which the Chieftain had taken refuge with his ten faithful aſſociates. Alarmed by a centinel, he prepares for defence; but being ſoon wounded in the arm, ſurrenders, endeavouring to conceal his high character, and to make the Spaniards believe him an ordinary ſoldier.

With their accuſtom'd ſhouts, and greedy toil,
Our furious troops now riot in their ſpoil;

* Eſte es el cierto y verdadero cuento,
De la famoſa Dido disfamada
Que Virgilio Maron ſin miramiento
Falſeó ſu hiſtoria y caſtidad preciada
Por dar a ſus ficciones ornamento
Pues vemos que eſta Reyna importunada
Pudiéndoſe caſar y no quemarſe
Antes quemarſe quiſo, que caſarſe.

Through

Through the lone village their quick rapine ſpread,
Nor leave unpillag'd e'en a ſingle ſhed:
When, from a tent, that, plac'd on ſafer ground,
The neighbouring hill's uncultur'd ſummit crown'd,
A woman ruſh'd, who, in her haſty flight,
Ran through the rougheſt paths along the rocky height.
A Negro of our train, who mark'd her way,
Soon made the hapleſs fugitive his prey;
For thwarting crags her doubtful ſteps impede,
And the fair form was ill prepar'd for ſpeed;
For at her breaſt ſhe bore her huddled ſon;
To fifteen months the infant's life had run:
From our brave captive ſprung the blooming boy,
Of both his parents the chief pride and joy.
The Negro careleſsly his victim brought,
Nor knew th' important prize his haſte had caught.
Our ſoldiers now, to catch the cooling tide,
Had ſallied to the murmuring river's ſide:
When the unhappy Wife beheld her Lord,
His ſtrong arms bound with a diſgraceful cord,
Stript of each enſign of his paſt command,
And led the pris'ner of our ſhouting band;
Her anguiſh burſt not into vain complaint,
No female terrors her firm ſoul attaint;
But, breathing fierce diſdain, and anger wild,
Thus ſhe exclaim'd, advancing with her child:
The ſtronger arm that in this ſhameful band
Has tied thy weak effeminated hand,
Had nobler pity to thy ſtate expreſt
If it had bravely pierc'd that coward breaſt.
Wert thou the warrior whoſe heroic worth
So ſwiftly flew around the ſpacious earth,
Whoſe name alone, unaided by thy arm,
Shook the remoteſt clime with fear's alarm?
Wert thou the victor whoſe triumphant ſtrain
Promis'd with rapid ſword to vanquiſh Spain;

To make new realms Arauco's power revere,
And spread her empire o'er the Arctic sphere?
Wretch that I am! how was my heart deceiv'd,
In all the noble pride with which it heav'd,
When through the world my boasted title ran,
Tresia, the wife of great Caupolican!
Now, plung'd in misery from the heights of fame,
My glories end in this detested shame,
To see thee captive in a lonely spot,
When death and honour might have been thy lot!
What now avail thy scenes of happier strife,
So dearly bought by many a nobler life;
The wondrous feats, that valour scarce believ'd,
By thee with hazard and with toil atchiev'd?
Where are the vaunted fruits of thy command,
The laurels gather'd by this fetter'd hand?
All sunk! all turn'd to this abhorr'd disgrace,
To live the slave of this ignoble race!
Say, had thy soul no strength, thy hand no lance,
To triumph o'er the fickle pow'r of chance?
Dost thou not know, that, to the Warrior's name,
A gallant exit gives immortal fame?
Behold the burthen which my breast contains,
Since of thy love no other pledge remains!
Hadst thou in glory's arms resign'd thy breath,
We both had follow'd thee in joyous death:
Take, take thy son! he was a tie most dear,
Which spotless love once made my heart revere;
Take him!—by generous pain, and wounded pride,
The currents of this fruitful breast are dried:
Rear him thyself, for thy gigantic frame,
To woman turn'd, a woman's charge may claim:
A mother's title I no more desire,
Or shameful children from a shameful sire!
As thus she spoke, with growing madness stung,
The tender nursling from her arms she flung

With

With ſavage fury, haſt'ning from our ſight,
While anguiſh ſeem'd to aid her rapid flight.
Vain were our efforts; our indignant cries,
Nor gentle prayers, nor angry threats, ſuffice
To make her breaſt, where cruel frenzy burn'd,
Receive the little innocent ſhe ſpurn'd.

The Spaniards, after providing a nurſe for this unfortunate child, return with their priſoner Caupolican to their fort, which they enter in triumph.

The Indian General, perceiving that all attempts to conceal his quality are ineffectual, deſires a conference with the Spaniſh Captain Reynoſo.

CANTO XXXIV.

CAUPOLICAN entreats Reynoſo to grant his life, but without any ſigns of terror. He affirms it will be the only method of appeaſing the ſanguinary hatred by which the contending nations are inflamed; and he offers, from his great influence over his country, to introduce the Chriſtian worſhip, and to bring the Araucanians to conſider themſelves as the ſubjects of the Spaniſh Monarch. His propoſals are rejected, and he is ſentenced to be impaled, and ſhot to death with arrows. He is unappall'd by this decree; but firſt deſires to be publicly baptized: after which ceremony, he is inhumanly led in chains to a ſcaffold. He diſplays a calm contempt of death; but, on ſeeing a wretched Negro appointed his executioner, his indignation burſts forth, and he hurls the Negro from the ſcaffold, entreating to die by a more honourable hand. His horrid ſentence is however executed. He ſupports the agonies of the ſtake with patient intrepidity, till a choſen band of archers put a period to his life.

Our brave Ercilla expreſſes his abhorrence of this atrocious ſcene; and adds, that if he had been preſent, this cruel execution ſhould not have taken place.

The conſequence of it was ſuch as Caupolican foretold:—the Araucanians determine to revenge his death, and aſſemble to elect a new General.

neral. The Poet makes an abrupt tranſition from their debate, to relate the adventures of Don Garcia, with whom he was himſelf marching to explore new regions. The inhabitants of the diſtricts they invade, alarmed at the approach of the Spaniards, conſult on the occaſion. An Indian, named Tunconabala, who had ſerved under the Araucanians, addreſſes the aſſembly, and recommends to them a mode of eluding the ſuppoſed avaricious deſigns of the Spaniards, by ſending meſſengers to them, who ſhould aſſume an appearance of extreme poverty, and repreſent their country as barren, and thus induce the invaders to turn their arms towards a different quarter. He offers to engage in this ſervice himſelf. The Indians adopt the project he recommends, and remove their valuable effects to the interior parts of their country.

CANTO XXXV.

DON GARCIA being arrived at the boundaries of Chile, which no Spaniard had paſſed, encourages his ſoldiers, in a ſpirited harangue, to the acquiſition of the new provinces which lay before them. They enter a rude and rocky country, in which they are expoſed to many hazards by their deceitful guides. Tunconabala meets them, as he had projected, with the appearance of extreme poverty; and, after many aſſurances of the ſterility of that region, adviſes them to return, or to advance by a different path, which he repreſents to them as dangerous, but the only practicable road. On finding them reſolved to preſs forward, he ſupplies them with a guide. They advance, with great toil and danger. Their guide eſcapes from them. They continue their march, through various hardſhips, in a deſolate region. They at length diſcover a fertile plain, and a large lake with many little inhabited iſlands. As they approach the lake, a large gondola, with twelve oars, advances to meet them: the party it contained leap aſhore, and ſalute the Spaniards with expreſſions of amity.

CANTO XXXVI.

THE young Chieftain of the gondola ſupplies the Spaniards with proviſions, refuſing to accept any reward: and our Poet celebrates all the inhabitants of this region, for their amiable ſimplicity of manners. He viſits one of the principal iſlands, where he is kindly entertained. He diſcovers that the lake had a communication with the ſea, by a very rough and dangerous channel: this circumſtance obliges the Spaniards, though reluctant, to return. They lament the neceſſity of paſſing again through the hardſhips of their former road. A young Indian undertakes to conduct them by an eaſier way. But our adventurous Ercilla, before the little army ſet forth on their return, engages ten choſen aſſociates to embark with him in a ſmall veſſel, and paſs the dangerous channel. He lands on a wild and ſandy ſpot, and, advancing half a mile up the country, engraves a ſtanza, to record this adventure, on the bark of a tree. He repaſſes the channel, and rejoins the Spaniſh troops; who, after much difficulty, reach the city of Imperial. Our Poet then touches on ſome particulars of his perſonal hiſtory, which I mention in the ſlight ſketch of his life. He afterwards promiſes his reader to relate the iſſue of the debate among the Araucanian Chieftains, on the election of their new General; but, recollecting in the inſtant that Spain herſelf is in arms, he entreats the favour of his Sovereign to inſpire him with new ſpirit, that he may devote himſelf to that higher and more intereſting ſubject.

CANTO XXXVII.

OUR Poet, in this his laſt canto, ſeems to begin a new work. He enters into a diſcuſſion of Philip's right to the dominion of Portugal, and his acquiſition of that kingdom; when, ſinking under the weight of this new ſubject, he declares his reſolution of leaving it to ſome happier Poet. He recapitulates the various perils and hardſhips of his own life, and, remarking that he has ever been unfortunate, and that all his labours are unrewarded, he conſoles himſelf with the reflection, that

honour

honour consists not in the possession of rewards, but in the consciousness of having deserved them. He concludes with a pious resolution to withdraw himself from the vain pursuits of the world, and to devote himself to God.

NOTE XI. VERSE 280.

At once the Bard of Glory and of Love.] The Epic powers of Camoens have received their due honour in our language, by the elegant and spirited translation of Mr. Mickle; but our country is still a stranger to the lighter graces and pathetic sweetness of his shorter compositions. These, as they are illustrated by the Spanish notes of his indefatigable Commentator, *Manuel de Faria*, amount to two volumes in folio. I shall present the reader with a specimen of his Sonnets, for which he is celebrated as the rival of Petrarch. Of the three translations which follow, I am indebted for the two first to an ingenious friend, from whom the public may wish me to have received more extensive obligations of a similar nature. It may be proper to add, that the first Sonnet of Camoens, like that of Petrarch, is a kind of preface to the amorous poetry of its author.

SONETO I.

EM quanto quis Fortuna que tiveſſe
Eſperanca de algum contentamento,
O goſto de hum ſuave penſamento
Me fez que ſeus effeytos eſcreveſſe.
Porèm temendo Amor que aviſo deſſe
Minha eſcritura a algum juizo iſento,
Eſcureccome o engenho co' o tormento,
Para que ſeus enganos naõ diſſeſſe
O vós, que amor obriga a ſer ſogeytos
A diverſas vontades! quando lerdes
Num breve livro caſos taõ diverſos;
Verdades puras ſaõ, & naõ defeytos.
Entendey que ſegundo o amor tiverdes,
Tircis o entendimento de meus verſos.

SONETO XIX.

ALMA minha gentil, que te partiſte
Taõ cedo deſta vida deſcontente,
Repouſa lâ no ceo eternamente,
E viva eu cà na terra ſempre triſte.
Se là no aſſento etereo, onde ſubiſte,
Memoria deſta vida ſe conſente,
Naõ te eſqueças de aquelle amor ardente
Que já nos olhos meus taõ puro viſte.
Eſe vires que póde merecerte
Algũa couſa a dor queme ſicou
Da magoa, ſem remedio, de perderte,
Roga a Deos que teus annos encurtou,
Que taõ cedo de câ me leve a verte,
Quaõ cedo de meus olhos te levou.

SONNET I.

WHILE on my head kind Fortune deign'd to pour
Her lavish boons, and through my willing soul
Made tides of extasy and pleasure roll,
I sung the raptures of each passing hour.
But Love, who heard me praise the golden shower,
Resolv'd my fond presumption to controul;
And painful darkness o'er my spirit stole,
Lest I should dare to tell his treacherous power.
O ye, whom his hard yoke compels to bend
To others' will, if in my various lay
Sad plaints ye find, and fears, and cruel wrong,
To suffering nature and to truth attend;
For in the measure ye have felt his sway,
Your sympathizing hearts will feel my song.

SONNET XIX.

ON THE DEATH OF THE POET'S MISTRESS, DONNA CATALINA DE ATAIDE, WHO DIED AT THE AGE OF TWENTY.

GO, gentle spirit! now supremely blest,
From scenes of pain and struggling virtue go:
From thy immortal seat of heavenly rest
Behold us lingering in a world of woe!
And if beyond the grave, to saints above,
Fond memory still the transient past pourtrays,
Blame not the ardor of my constant love,
Which in these longing eyes was wont to blaze.
But if from virtue's source my sorrows rise,
For the sad loss I never can repair,
Be thine to justify my endless sighs,
And to the Throne of Grace prefer thy prayer,
That Heaven, who made thy span of life so brief,
May shorten mine, and give my soul relief.

SONETO LXXII.

QUANDO de minhas magoas a comprida
  Maginaçaõ os olhos me adormece,
  Em ſonhos aquella alma me aparece
  Que para mi foy ſonho neſta vida.
Lá numa ſoidade, onde eſtendida
  A viſta por o campo desfallece,
  Corro apos ella ; & ella entaõ parece
  Que maes de mi ſe alonga, compelida,
Brado : Naõ me fujays, ſombra benina.
  Ella (os olhos em mi c'hum brado pejo,
  Como quem diz, que ja naõ pode ſer)
Torna a fugirme : torno a bradar ; dina :
  E antes q' acabe em mene, acordo, & vejo
  Que nem hum breve engano poſſo ter.

The Spaniſh Commentator of Camoens conſiders this viſion as the moſt exquiſite Sonnet of his author, and affirms that it is ſuperior to the much longer poem of Petrarch's, on a ſimilar idea. It may amuſe a curious reader to compare both Camoens and Petrarch, on this occaſion, with Milton, who has alſo written a Sonnet on the ſame ſubject. The Commentator Faria has a very pleaſant remark on this ſpecies of compoſition. He vindicates the dignity of the amorous Sonnet, by producing an alphabetical liſt of two hundred great Poets, who have thus complimented the object of their affection ; and he very gravely introduces Achilles as the leader of this choir, for having celebrated Briſeis. If the Sonnets of the Portugueze Poet are worthy of attention, his Elegies are perhaps ſtill more ſo, as they illuſtrate many particulars of his intereſting life, which ended in 1579, under the moſt cruel circumſtances of neglect and poverty.

Portugal has produced no leſs than fourteen Epic poems ; twelve in

SONNET LXXII.

WHILE preſt with woes from which it cannot flee,
My fancy ſinks, and ſlumber ſeals my eyes,
Her ſpirit haſtens in my dreams to riſe,
Who was in life but as a dream to me.
O'er a drear waſte, ſo wide no eye can ſee
How far its ſenſe-evading limit lies,
I follow her quick ſtep; but ah! ſhe flies!
Our diſtance widening by ſtern Fate's decree.
Fly not from me, kind ſhadow! I exclaim:
She, with fix'd eyes, that her ſoft thoughts reveal,
And ſeem to ſay, " Forbear thy fond deſign!"
Still flies:—I call her; but her half-form'd name
Dies on my falt'ring tongue.—I wake, and feel
Not e'en one ſhort deluſion may be mine.

---

her own language, and two in that of Spain. At the head of theſe ſtands the Luſiad of Camoens. The Malaca Conquiſtada of Franciſco de Sa' de Meneſis—and the Ulyſſea, or Liſboa Edificada, of Gabriel Pereira de Caſtro, are two of the moſt eminent among its ſucceſſors.—For a liſt of the Portugueze Epic Poets, and for an elegant copy of the Malaca Conquiſtada, I am indebted to the very liberal politeneſs of the Chevalier de Pinto, the Ambaſſador of Portugal.

NOTE XII. VERSE 287.

Where Eulogy, with one eternal ſmile.] Though a vain inſipidity may be conſidered as the general characteriſtic of the French *Eloges*, it is but juſt to remark, that ſeveral of theſe performances are an honour to the country which produced them; and particularly the little volume of *Eloges* lately publiſhed by Mr. D'Alembert. This agreeable Encomiaſt has

has varied and enlivened the tone of panegyric by the most happy mixture of amusing anecdote, judicious criticism, and philosophical precept: we may justly say of him, what he himself has said of his predecessor Fontenelle: Il a solidement assuré sa gloire .... par ces Eloges si interessans, pleins d'une raison si fine et si profonde, qui font aimer et respecter les lettres, qui inspirent aux génies naissans la plus noble emulation, et qui feront passer le nom de l'auteur à la posterité, avec celui de la compagnie célebre dont il a été le digne organe, et des grands hommes dont il s'est rendu l'egal en devenant leur panégyriste.

D'Alembert, Eloge de la Motte, p. 279.

NOTE XIII. VERSE 302.

No great Examples rise, but many a Rule.] Before the appearance of Bossu's celebrated treatise on Epic poetry, the French had a similar work written in Latin. The learned Jesuit Mambrun published, in 1652, a quarto volume, entitled, Dissertatio Peripatetica de Epico Carmine. His Dissertation is founded on the principles of Aristotle, whom he considers as infallible authority; and he introduces the Greek Philosopher to decide the following very curious question, which he argues with becoming gravity, Whether the action of a woman can be sufficiently splendid to prove a proper subject for an Epic poem.—Having reasoned on this delicate point, with more learning than gallantry, he thus concludes the debate: Congruenter magis finem huic quæstioni ponere non licet, quam verbis Aristotelis capite 15 Poeticæ, ubi de moribus disputat, Δεύτερον δε, τα αρμοττοντα. Εστι γαρ ανδρειον μεν το ηθος, αλλ' ουκ αρμοττον γυναικι, το ανδρειαν η δεινην ειναι—id est, secunda proprietas morum est, ut sint congruentes, ut esse fortem mos est aliquis; at non congruit mulieri fortem esse aut terribilem ut vertit Riccobonus, vel *prudentem* ut Pacius. The latter interpretation of the word δεινην would render the decision of these Philosophers very severe indeed on the Female character, by supposing it incapable of displaying both fortitude and prudence.—The Fair Sex have found an advocate, on this occasion, in a French Epic Poet. The famous Chapelain, in the preface to his unfortunate Pucelle, has very warmly attacked these ungallant maxims of Mambrun and Aristotle. In speaking of certain critics, who had censured the choice of his subject, before the publication of his poem, he says, Ceux-cy, jurant sur le texte d'Aristote,

riſtote, maintiennent que la femme eſt une erreur de la nature, qui ayant toujours intention de faire un homme, s'arreſte ſouvent en chemin, et ſe voit contrainte, par la reſiſtance de la matiere, de laiſſer ſon deſſein imparfait. Ils tiennent la force corporelle tellement neceſſaire, dans la compoſition d'un heros, que quand il n'y auroit autre defaut à reprocher à la femme, ils luy en refuſeroient le nom, pour cela ſeulement, qu'elle n'a pas la vigueur d'un Athlete, et que la molleſſe de ſa complexion l'empeſche de pouvoir durer au travail. Ils n'eſtiment ce Sexe capable d'aucune penſée heroique, dans la creance que l'eſprit ſuit le temperament du corps, et que, dans le corps de la femme, l'eſprit ne peut rien concevoir, qui ne ſe ſente de ſa foibleſſe. — — — Ces Meſſieurs me pardonneront, toutefois, ſi je leur dis qu'ils ne conſiderent pas trop bien quelle eſt la nature de la vertu heroique, qu'ils en definiſſent l'eſſence, par un de ſes moindres accidens, et qu'ils en font plutoſt une vertu brutale, qu'une vertu divine. — — — Ils ſe devroient ſouvenir que cette vertu n'a preſque rien à faire avec le corps, et qu'elle conſiſte, non dans les efforts d'un Milon de Crotone, où l'eſprit n'a aucune part, mais en ceux des ames nées pour les grandes choſes; quand par une ardeur pluſqu' humaine, elles s'elevent audeſſus d'elles-meſmes; qu'elles forment quelque deſſein, dont l'utilité eſt auſſi grande que la difficulté, et qu'elles choiſiſſent les moyens de l'executer avec conſtance et hauteur de courage. Pour prevenus qu'ils ſoient en faveurs des hommes, je ne penſe pas qu'ils vouluſſent attribuer à leur ame un ſeul avantage, auquel l'ame de la femme ne puſt aſpirer, ni faire deux eſpeces des deux ſexes, deſquels la raiſon de tous les ſages n'a fait qu'une juſqu'icy—je ne croy pas non plus qu'ils imaginent que les vertus morales ayent leur ſiege ailleurs, que dans la volonté, ou dans l'entendement. Mais ſi elles y ont leur ſiege, et ſi l'on ne peut dire que ces deux facultés ſoient autres, dans l'ame de la femme que dans l'ame de l'homme, ils ne peuvent, ſans abſurdité, accorder une de ces vertus à l'homme, et ne l'accorder pas à la femme. En effet, cette belle penſée d'Ariſtote qui a donné occaſion à leur erreur, eſt ſi peu phyſique, qu'elle fait plus de tort à la philoſophie du Lycée, qu'elle n'appuye l'opinion de ceux que nous combattons." Chapelain then enters into an hiſtorical defence of Female dignity, and oppoſes the authority of Plato to that of Ariſtotle, concerning the propriety of woman's ever appearing on the great theatre of active life. Happy had he ſupported

ported the Female cauſe as forcibly, in the execution of his poem, as in the arguments of his preface: but Chapelain was unfortunately one of the many examples, which every country affords, that the moſt perfect union of virtue and erudition is utterly inſufficient to form a Poet; and, as he had the ill fate to be perſecuted by the pitileſs rigour of Boileau, his inharmonious poem can never ſink into a deſirable oblivion. The treatiſe of Mambrun ſeems to have excited, among the French, an eagerneſs to diſtinguiſh themſelves in the field of Epic poetry; for ſeveral Epic poems were publiſhed in France in a few years after that work appeared; but moſt of them, and particularly thoſe on ſcriptural ſubjects, were hardly ever known to exiſt.

> Le Jonas inconnu ſeche dans la pouſſiere,
> Le David imprimé n'a point vu la lumiere,
> Le Moïſe commence à moiſir par les bords.
>
> Boileau, Sat. ix.

The Alaric of Scudery, and the Clovis of Deſmareſts, can ſcarce be reckoned more fortunate; but in this band of unſucceſsful Epic writers, there was one Poet, of whom even the ſevere Boileau could not allow himſelf to ſpeak ill; this was Le Moine, the author of St. Louis. The Satiriſt being aſked, why he had never mentioned the poetry of Le Moine? replied with the two following verſes, parodied from Corneille,

> Il s'eſt trop élevé pour en dire du mal,
> Il s'eſt trop égaré pour en dire du bien.

The judicious and candid Heyne has beſtowed conſiderable applauſe on Le Moine, in one of his notes to the 6th book of Virgil, where he examines the different methods by which the Epic Poets have introduced their various pictures of futurity. From his account, Le Moine excels in this article. I can ſpeak only from the opinion of this learned Critic, for the neglected French Poet is become ſo rare, that I have ſought in vain for a copy of his work.——The number of obſcure Epic writers in France is very trifling, compared to thoſe which Italy has produced; the Italians have been indefatigable in this ſpecies of compoſition, and, as if they had reſolved to leave no Hero unſung, their celebrated Noveliſt, Giraldi

Cinthio has written an Epic poem, in twenty-six cantos, on the exploits of Hercules.

NOTE XIV. VERSE 304.

Keen Boileau ſhall not want his proper praiſe.] Nicolas Boileau Deſpreaux was born *in* or *near* Paris, for it is a conteſted point, on the firſt of November 1636, and died in March 1711 of a dropſy, the very diſeaſe which terminated the life of his Engliſh rival. The Lutrin of Boileau, ſtill conſidered by ſome French Critics of the preſent time as the beſt poem to which France has given birth, was firſt publiſhed in 1674. It is with great reaſon and juſtice that Voltaire confeſſes the Lutrin inferior to the Rape of the Lock. Few Poets can be ſo properly compared as Pope and Boileau; and, wherever their writings will admit of compariſon, we may, without any national partiality, adjudge the ſuperiority to the Engliſh Bard. Theſe two great authors reſembled each other as much in the integrity of their lives, as in the ſubjects and execution of their ſeveral compoſitions. There are two actions recorded of Boileau, which ſufficiently prove that the inexorable Satiriſt had a moſt generous and friendly heart; when Patru, the celebrated Advocate, who was ruined by his paſſion for literature, found himſelf under the painful neceſſity of ſelling his expenſive library, and had almoſt agreed to part with it for a moderate ſum, Boileau gave him a much ſuperior price; and, after paying the money, added this condition to the purchaſe, that Patru ſhould retain, during his life, the poſſeſſion of the books. The ſucceeding inſtance of the Poet's generoſity is yet nobler:—when it was rumoured at court that the King intended to retrench the penſion of Corneille, Boileau haſtened to Madame de Monteſpan, and ſaid, that his Sovereign, equitable as he was, could not, without injuſtice, grant a penſion to an author like himſelf, juſt aſcending Parnaſſus, and take it from Corneille, who had ſo long been ſeated on the ſummit; that he entreated her, for the honour of the King, to prevail on his Majeſty rather to ſtrike off *his* penſion, than to withdraw that reward from a man whoſe title to it was incomparably greater; and that he ſhould more eaſily conſole himſelf under the loſs of that diſtinction, than under the affliction of ſeeing it taken away from ſuch a Poet as Corneille. This magnanimous application had the ſucceſs which it deſerved, and it

appears the more noble, when we recollect that the rival of Corneille was the intimate friend of Boileau.

The long and unreserved intercourse which subsisted between our Poet and Racine was highly beneficial and honourable to both. The dying farewell of the latter is the most expressive eulogy on the private character of Boileau: Je regarde comme un bonheur pour moi de mourir avant vous, said the tender Racine, in taking a final leave of his faithful and generous friend.

NOTE XV. Verse 313.

Nor, gentle Gresset, shall thy sprightly rhyme.] This elegant and amiable writer was born at Amiens, and educated in the society of the Jesuits, to whom he has paid a grateful compliment in bidding them adieu. At the age of twenty-six he published his Ver-vert, a poem in four cantos, which commemorates

> La cause infortunée
> D'un Perroquet non moins brillant qu' Enée:
> Non moins dévot, plus malheureux que lui.

Voltaire has spoken invidiously of this delightful performance; but a spirited French Critic has very justly vindicated the merits of Gresset in the following remark:——Le Ver-vert sera toujours un poeme charmant et inimitable, sans souiller sa plume par l'impiété et la licence qui deshonorent celle de l'auteur de *La Pucelle*, le Poete a su y répandre un agrément, une fraîcheur et une vivacité de coloris, qui le rendent aussi piquant dans les détails, qu'il est riche et ingénieux dans la fiction. On placera toujours cet agreable badinage parmi les productions originales, propres à faire aimer des etrangers la gaieté Françoise en écartant toute mauvaise idée de nos mœurs.

NOTE XVI. Verse 325.

See lovely Boccage, in ambition strong.] Madame du Boccage is known to the English reader as the correspondent of Lord Chesterfield. This ingenious and spirited Lady has written three poems of the Epic kind—Le Paradis Terrestre, in six cantos, from Milton; La Mort d'Abel, in five

cantos,

cantos, from Gesner; and a more original composition, in ten cantos, on the exploits of Columbus. I have alluded to a passage in the last poem, where Zama, the daughter of an Indian Chief, is thus described:

Comme Eve, elle etoit nue; une egale innocence
L'offre aux regards sans honte, et voile ses appas;
Les Graces qu'elle ignore accompagnent ses pas,
Et pour tout vêtement, en formant sa parure,
D'un plumage azuré couvrirent sa ceinture.

The works of this elegant female Poet contain an animated version of Pope's Temple of Fame. And she has added to her poetry an account of her travels through England, Holland, and Italy, in a series of entertaining letters, addressed to Madame du Perron, her sister.

NOTE XVII. VERSE 344.

To swell the glory of her great Voltaire.] Though the Henriade has been frequently reprinted, and the partizans of Voltaire have endeavoured to make it a national point of honour to support its reputation, it seems at length to be sinking under that neglect and oblivion, which never fail to overtake every feeble offspring of the Epic Muse. Several of our most eminent Critics have attacked this performance with peculiar severity, and some have condemned it on the most opposite principles, merely because it does not coincide with their respective systems. Their sentence has been passed only in short and incidental remarks; but a French writer, inflamed by personal animosity against Voltaire, has raised three octavo volumes on the defects of this single poem. Mr. Clement, in his "*Entretiens sur le Poeme Epique relativement à la Henriade,*" has endeavoured to prove it utterly deficient in all the essential points of Epic poetry;—in the structure of its general plan, in the conduct of its various parts, in sentiment, in character, in style. His work indeed displays an acrimonious detestation of the Poet whom he examines; and perhaps there is hardly any human composition which could support the scrutiny of so rigid an inquisitor: the Henriade is utterly unequal to it; for in many articles we are obliged to confess, that the justice of the Critic is not inferior to his severity. He discovers, in his dissection of the Poem,

Poem, the skill of an anatomist, with the malignity of an assassin. If any thing can deserve such rigorous treatment, it is certainly the artifice of Voltaire, who, in his Essay on Epic Poetry, has attempted, with much ingenuity, to sink the reputation of all the great Epic Writers, that he might raise himself to their level; an attempt in which no author can ultimately succeed; for, as D'Alembert has admirably remarked on a different occasion, Le public laissera l'amour propre de chaque ecrivain faire son plaidoyer, rira de leurs efforts, non de genie, mais de raisonnement, pour hausser leur place, et finira par mettre chacun à la sienne.

NOTE XVIII. VERSE 475.

And, shrouded in a mist of moral spleen.] It seems to be the peculiar infelicity of Pope, that his moral virtues have had a tendency to diminish his poetical reputation. Possessing a benevolent spirit; and wishing to make the art, to which he devoted his life, as serviceable as he could to the great interests of mankind, he soon quitted the higher regions of poetry, for the more level, and more frequented field of Ethics and of Satire. He declares, with a noble pride arising from the probity of his intention,

> That not in Fancy's maze he wander'd long,
> But stoop'd to truth, and moraliz'd his song.

The severity of Criticism has from hence inferred, that his imagination was inferior to the other faculties of his mind, and that he possessed not that vigour of genius which might enable him to rank with our more sublime and pathetic Bards. This inference appears to me extremely defective both in candour and in reason; it would surely be more generous, and I will venture to add, more just, to assign very different causes for his having latterly applied himself to moral and satyric composition. If his preceding poems displayed only a moderate portion of fancy and of tenderness, we might indeed very fairly conjecture, that he quitted the kind of poetry, where these qualities are particularly required, because Nature directed him to shine only as the Poet of reason.—But his earlier productions will authorize an opposite conclusion. At an age when few authors have produced any capital work, Pope gave the world two poems,

one the offspring of imagination, and the other of ſenſibility, which will ever ſtand at the head of the two poetical claſſes to which they belong: his Rape of the Lock, and his Eloiſe, have nothing to fear from any rivals, either of paſt or of future time. When a writer has diſplayed ſuch early proofs of exquiſite fancy, and of tender enthuſiaſm, thoſe great conſtituents of the real Poet, ought we not to regret that he did not give a greater ſcope and freer exerciſe to theſe qualities, rather than to aſſert that he did not poſſeſs them in a ſuperlative degree? Why then, it may be aſked, did he confine himſelf to compoſitions in which theſe have little ſhare? The life and character of Pope will perfectly explain the reaſons, why he did not always follow the higher ſuggeſtions of his own natural genius. He had entertained an opinion, that by ſtooping to truth, and employing his talents on the vices and follies of the paſſing time, he ſhould be moſt able to benefit mankind. The idea was perhaps ill-founded, but his conduct in conſequence of it was certainly noble. Its effects however were moſt unhappy; for it took from him all his enjoyment of life, and may injure, in ſome degree, his immortal reputation: by ſuffering his thoughts to dwell too much on knaves and fools, he fell into the ſplenetic deluſion, that the world is nothing but a compound of vice and folly; and from hence he has been reproached for ſuppoſing that all human merit was confined to himſelf, and to a few of his moſt intimate correſpondents.

There was an amiable peculiarity in the character of Pope, which had great influence both on his conduct and compoſition—he embraced the ſentiments of thoſe he loved with a kind of ſuperſtitious regard; his imagination and his judgment were perpetually the dupes of an affectionate heart: it was this which led him, at the requeſt of his idol Bolingbroke, to write a ſublime poem on metaphyſical ideas which he did not perfectly comprehend; it was this which urged him almoſt to quarrel with Mr. Allen, in compliance with the caprices of a female friend; it was this which induced him, in the warmth of gratitude, to follow the abſurd hints of Warburton with all the blindneſs of infatuated affection. Whoever examines the life and writings of Pope with a minute and unprejudiced attention, will find that his excellencies, both as a Poet and a Man, were peculiarly his own; and that his failings were chiefly owing to the ill judgment, or the artifice, of his real and pre-

tended friends. The laviſh applauſe and the advice of his favourite Atterbury, was perhaps the cauſe of his preſerving the famous character of Addiſon, which, finely written as it is, all the lovers of Pope muſt wiſh him to have ſuppreſſed. Few of his friends had integrity or frankneſs ſufficient to perſuade him, that his ſatires would deſtroy the tranquillity of his life, and cloud the luſtre of his fame: yet, to the honour of Lyttelton, be it remembered, that he ſuggeſted ſuch ideas to the Poet, in the verſes which he wrote to him from Rome, with all the becoming zeal of enlightened friendſhip:

> No more let meaner Satire dim the rays
> That flow majeſtic from thy nobler bays!
> In all the flowery paths of Pindus ſtray,
> But ſhun that thorny, that unpleaſing way!
> Nor, when each ſoft, engaging Muſe is thine,
> Addreſs the leaſt attractive of the Nine!

This generous admonition did not indeed produce its intended effect, for other counſellors had given a different bias to the mind of the Poet, and the malignity of his enemies had exaſperated his temper; yet he afterwards turned his thoughts towards the compoſition of a national Epic poem, and poſſibly in conſequence of the hint which this Epiſtle of Lyttelton contains. The intention was formed too late, for it aroſe in his decline of life. Had he poſſeſſed health and leiſure to execute ſuch a work, I am perſuaded it would have proved a glorious acquiſition to the literature of our country: the ſubject indeed which he had choſen muſt be allowed to have an unpromiſing appearance; but the opinion of Addiſon concerning his Sylphs, which was ſurely honeſt, and not invidious, may teach us hardly ever to decide againſt the intended works of a ſuperior genius. Yet in all the Arts, we are perpetually tempted to pronounce ſuch deciſions. I have frequently condemned ſubjects which my friend Romney had ſelected for the pencil; but in the ſequel, my opinion only proved that I was near-ſighted in thoſe regions of imagination, where his keener eyes commanded all the proſpect.

NOTES

TO THE

FOURTH EPISTLE.

NOTE I. VERSE 103.

PROCEED, *ye Sisters of the tuneful Shell.*] For the advice which I have thus ventured to give ſuch of my fair readers as have a talent for poetry, I ſhall produce them a much higher poetical authority. In the age of Petrarch, an Italian Lady, named Giuſtina Perrot, was deſirous of diſtinguiſhing herſelf by this pleaſing accompliſhment; but the remarks of the world, which repreſented it as improper for her ſex, diſcouraged her ſo far, that ſhe was almoſt tempted to relinquiſh her favourite purſuit. In her doubts on this point, ſhe conſulted the celebrated Poet of her country in an elegant Sonnet; and received his anſwer on the intereſting ſubject in the ſame poetical form. I ſhall add the two Sonnets, with an imitation of each.

IO vorrei pur drizzar queste mie piume
  Colà, Signor, dove il desio n' invita,
E dopo morte rimaner' in vita
Col chiaro di virtute inclyto lume
Ma' volgo inerte, che dal rio costume
Vinto, ha d' ogni suo ben la via smarrita,
Come degna di biasmo ogn' hor m' addita
Ch' ir tenti d' Elicona al sacro fiume.
All ago, al fuso, piu ch' al lauro, o al mirto,
Come che qui non sia la gloria mia,
Vuol ch' habbia sempre questa mente intesa.
Dimmi tu hormai, che per piu dritta via
A Parnasso t' en vai, nobile spirto,
Dovrò dunque lasciar si degna impresa?

LA gola, e 'l sonno, e l' oziose piume
  Hanno del mondo ogni virtù sbandita,
Ond' è dal corso suo quasi smarrita
Nostra natura vinta dal costume:
Ed è si spento ogni benigno lume
Del ciel, per cui s' informa umana vita,
Che per cosa mirabile s' addita
Chi vuol far d' Elicona nascer fiume.
Qual vaghezza di lauro, qual di mirto?
Povera e nuda vai filosofia,
Dice la turba al vil guadagno intesa.
Pochi compagni avrai per l'altra via
Tanto ti prego più, gentile spirto,
Non lasciar la magnanima tua impresa!

THE SONNET OF GIUSTINA TO PETRARCH.

GLADLY would I exchange inglorious eaſe
For future fame, the Poet's fond deſire!
And ſtill to live, in ſpite of death, aſpire
By Virtue's light, that darkneſs cannot ſeize:
But, ſtupified by Cuſtom's blank decrees,
The idle vulgar, void of liberal fire,
Bid me, with ſcorn, from Helicon retire,
And rudely blame my generous hope to pleaſe.
Diſtaffs, not laurels, to your ſex belong,
They cry—as honour were beyond our view:
To ſuch low cares they wiſh my ſpirit bent.
Say thou! who marcheſt, 'mid the favor'd few,
To high Parnaſſus, with triumphant ſong,
Should I abandon ſuch a fair intent?

THE ANSWER OF PETRARCH.

LUXURIOUS pleaſure, and lethargic eaſe
Have deaden'd in the world each bright deſire:
Our thoughts no more with Nature's force aſpire;
Cuſtom's cold powers the drooping fancy ſeize:
So loſt each light that taught the ſoul to pleaſe,
Each heavenly ſpark of life-directing fire,
That all, who join the Heliconian choir,
Are frantic deem'd by Folly's dull decrees.
What charms, what worth to Laurel-wreaths belong?
Naked and poor Philoſophy we view,
Exclaims the crowd, on ſordid gain intent.—
Aſſociates in thy path thou'lt find but few;
The more, I pray thee, Nymph of graceful ſong,
Indulge thy ſpirit in its noble bent!

NOTE II. VERSE 210.

As wounded Learning blushes to recite!] Milton sold the copy of Paradise Lost for the sum of five pounds, on the condition of receiving fifteen pounds more at three subsequent periods, to be regulated by the sale of the Poem.—For the ceiling at Whitehall, Rubens received three thousand pounds.

NOTE III. VERSE 298.

Receive the Laurel from Imperial Charles!] Ariosto is said to have been publicly crowned with laurel at Mantua, by the Emperor Charles the Vth, towards the end of the year 1532. This fact has been disputed by various writers, but it seems to be sufficiently established by the researches of Mazzuchelli.

The custom of crowning Poets with laurel is almost as ancient as poetry itself, says the Abbé du Resnel, in his Recherches sur les Poetes couronnez, a work which contains but scanty information on this curious topic. Petrarch is generally supposed to have revived this ancient solemnity, which had been abolished as a pagan institution in the reign of the Emperor Theodosius. It appears however, from two passages in the writings of Boccacio, that Dante had entertained serious thoughts of this honourable distinction, which his exile precluded him from receiving, as he chose, says his Biographer, to be crown'd only in his native city.

An amusing volume might be written on the honours which have been paid to Poets in different ages, and in various parts of the world. It is remarkable, that the most unpolished nations have been the most lavish in rewarding their Bards. There are two instances on record, in which poetical talents have raised their possessors even to sovereign dominion. The Scythians chose the Poet Thamyris for their king, though he was not a native of their country, επι τοσȣτον ηκε κιθαρωδιας, ως και βασιλεα σφων, καιπερ επηλυτον οντα, Σκυθας ποιησασθαι. Hist. Poet. Script. Edit. Gale, p. 250. Saxo Grammaticus begins the sixth book of his History by relating, that the Danes bestowed their vacant diadem on the Poet Hiarnus, as a reward for his having composed the best epitaph on their deceased sovereign Frotho. From the four Latin verses which the Historian has given us, as a translation

translation of this extraordinary epitaph, we may venture to affirm, that the poetical monarch obtain'd his crown on very easy conditions.

NOTE IV. VERSE 314.

For him her fountains gush with golden streams.] Of the great wealth which flowed into the hands of this extraordinary Poet, his friend and biographer Montalvan has given a particular account. This author concludes that Lope de Vega gained by his dramatic works alone a sum nearly equal to 20,000 pounds sterling; the revenue arising from the posts he held, and from his pension, was very considerable. His opulence was much encreased by the most splendid instances of private liberality. He received many costly presents from various characters to whom he was personally unknown; and he was himself heard to say, in speaking of his generous patron, that the Duke of Sessa alone had given him, at different periods of his life, sums almost amounting to six thousand pounds.

It must be confessed, that the noble patrons of English poetry have not equalled this example of Spanish munificence, even if we admit the truth of our traditionary anecdotes concerning the generosity of Lord Southampton to Shakespeare, and of Sir Philip Sidney to Spenser. Considering the liberality for which our nation is so justly celebrated, it is remarkable, that not a single English Poet appears to have been enriched by our monarchs: yet Spenser had every claim to the bounty of Elizabeth; he sung her praises in a strain which might gratify her pride; and of all who have flattered the great, he may justly be considered as the most worthy of reward. His song was the tribute of his heart as well as of his fancy, and the sex of his idol may be said to purify his incense from all the offensive particles of servile adulation. The neglect which he experienced from the vain, imperious, and ungrateful Elizabeth, appears the more striking, when we recollect, that her lovely rival, the beautiful and unfortunate Queen of Scots, signalized her superior generosity by a magnificent present of plate to the French Poet Ronsard. This neglected Bard was once the darling of France, and perhaps equalled Lope de Vega in the honours which he received: his sovereign, Charles the Ninth, composed some elegant verses in his praise, and the city of Toulouse presented him with a Minerva of massive silver.

If our princes and nobles have not equalled those of other kingdoms in liberality to the great Poets of their country, England may yet boast the name of a private gentleman, who discovered in this respect a most princely spirit; no nation, either ancient or modern, can produce an example of munificence more truly noble than the annual gratuity which Akenside received from Mr. Dyson; a tribute of generous and affectionate admiration, endeared to its worthy possessor by every consideration which could make it honourable both to himself and to his patron!

It has been lately lamented by an elegant and accomplished writer, who had too much reason for the complaint, that "the profession "of Literature, by far the most laborious of any, leads to no real be-"nefit." Experience undoubtedly proves, that it has a general tendency to impoverish its votaries; and the legislators of every country would act perhaps a wise, at all events an honourable part, if they corrected this tendency, by establishing public emoluments for such as eminently distinguish themselves in the various branches of science. It is surely possible to form such an establishment, which, without proving a national burthen, might aggrandize the literary glory of the nation, by preserving her men of letters from the evils so frequently connected with their pursuits, by securing, to those who deserve it, the possession of ease and honour, without damping their emulation, or destroying their independence.

NOTES TO THE FIFTH EPISTLE.

NOTE I. Verse 76.

THE loose Petronius gave the maxim birth.] Ariſtotle has ſaid but little, in his Poetics, concerning that weighty point, which has ſo much employed and embarraſſed the modern Critics—the machinery of the Epic poem; and the little which he has ſaid might rather furniſh an argument for its excluſion, than juſtify its uſe. But Rome, in her moſt degenerate days, produced a writer, to whoſe authority, contemptible as it is, moſt frequent appeals have been made in this curious literary queſtion. In almoſt every modern author who has touched, however ſlightly, on Epic poetry, we may find at leaſt ſome part of the following ſentence from Petronius Arbiter: — Ecce, belli civilis ingens opus quiſquis attigerit, niſi plenus litteris, ſub onere labetur. Non enim res geſtæ verſibus comprehendendæ ſunt, quod longe melius hiſtorici faciunt; ſed per ambages, deorumque miniſteria, & fabuloſum ſententiarum tormentum præcipitandus eſt liber ſpiritus; ut potius furentis animi vaticinatio appareat, quam religioſæ orationis ſub teſtibus fides.

Theſe remarks on the neceſſity of celeſtial agents, were evidently made to depreciate the Pharſalia of Lucan; and Petronius may be called a fair Critic, as Pope ſaid of Milbourne, on his oppoſition to Dryden, becauſe he produces his own poetry in contraſt to that which he condemns. His ſpecimen of the manner in which he thought an Epic poem ſhould be conducted, ſufficiently proves the abſurdity of his criticiſm;

ticiſm; for how inſipid is the fable in thoſe verſes which he has oppoſed to the Pharſalia, when compared to the firſt book of Lucan! Yet the Epic compoſition of Petronius has not wanted admirers: a Dutch Commentator is bold enough to ſay, that he prefers this ſingle rhapſody to three hundred volumes of ſuch poetry as Lucan's: an opinion which can only lead us to exclaim with Boileau,

Un ſot trouve toujours un plus ſot qui l'admire.

If men of letters, in the age of Lucan, differed in their ſentiments concerning machinery, the great changes that have ſince happened in the world, and the diſquiſitions which have appeared on the ſubject, are very far from having reconciled the judgment of modern writers on this important article. Two eminent Critics of the preſent time have delivered opinions on this topic ſo ſingularly oppoſite to each other, that I ſhall tranſcribe them both.

"In a theatrical entertainment, which employs both the eye and the "ear, it would be a groſs abſurdity to introduce upon the ſtage ſuperior "Beings in a viſible ſhape. There is not place for ſuch objection in an "Epic poem; and Boileau, with many other Critics, declares ſtrongly "for that ſort of machinery in an Epic poem. But waving authority, "which is apt to impoſe upon the judgment, let us draw what light we "can from reaſon. I begin with a preliminary remark, that this mat- "ter is but indiſtinctly handled by Critics. The poetical privilege of "animating inſenſible objects for enlivening a deſcription, is very differ- "ent from what is termed *machinery*, where deities, angels, devils, or "other ſupernatural powers, are introduced as real perſonages, mixing "in the action, and contributing to the cataſtrophe; and yet theſe two "things are conſtantly jumbled together in the reaſoning. The former "is founded on a natural principle; but can the latter claim the ſame "authority? So far from it, that nothing is more unnatural. Its "effects at the ſame time are deplorable. Firſt, it gives an air of "fiction to the whole, and prevents that impreſſion of reality which is "requiſite to intereſt our affections, and to move our paſſions; which "of itſelf is ſufficient to explode machinery, whatever entertainment it "may afford to readers of a fantaſtic taſte or irregular imagination.

"And

"And next, were it possible, by disguising the fiction, to delude us into "a notion of reality, which I think can hardly be, an insuperable objec- "tion would still remain, which is, that the aim or end of an Epic "poem can never be attained in any perfection where machinery is in- "troduced; for an evident reason, that virtuous emotions cannot be "raised successfully, but by the actions of those who are endued with "passions and affections like our own, that is, by human actions: and "as for moral instruction, it is clear that none can be drawn from "Beings who act not upon the same principles with us. Homer, it is "true, introduces the Gods into his fable; but the religion of his coun- "try authorized that liberty; it being an article in the Grecian creed, "that the Gods often interpose visibly and bodily in human affairs. I "must, however, observe, that Homer's Deities do no honour to his "poems. Fictions that transgress the bounds of nature seldom have a "good effect; they may inflame the imagination for a moment, but "will not be relished by any person of a correct taste. They may be of "some use to the lower rank of writers; but an author of genius has "much finer materials of nature's production for elevating his subject, "and making it interesting.——Voltaire, in his Essay upon Epic Poetry, "talking of the Pharsalia, observes judiciously, that the proximity of "time, the notoriety of events, the character of the age, enlightened and "political, joined with the solidity of Lucan's subject, deprived him of "all liberty of poetical fiction. Is it not amazing, that a Critic who "reasons so justly with respect to others, can be so blind with respect to "himself? Voltaire, not satisfied to enrich his language with images "drawn from invisible and superior Beings, introduces them into the "action. In the sixth canto of the Henriade, St. Louis appears in "person, and terrifies the soldiers; in the seventh canto, St. Louis "sends the God of Sleep to Henry; and in the tenth, the demons of "Discord, Fanaticism, War, &c. assist Aumale in a single combat with "Turenne, and are driven away by a good angel brandishing the sword "of God. To blend such fictitious personages in the same action with "mortals, makes a bad figure at any rate, and is intolerable in a history "so recent as that of Henry IV. This singly is sufficient to make the "Henriade a short-lived poem, were it otherwise possessed of every "beauty." *Elements of Criticism*, vol. ii. p. 389, 4th edition.

 "The

" The Pagan Gods and Gothic Fairies were equally out of credit when " Milton wrote. He did well therefore to ſupply their room with An- " gels and Devils. If theſe too ſhould wear out of the popular creed (and " they ſeem in a hopeful way, from the liberty ſome late Critics have " taken with them) I know not what other expedients the Epic Poet " might have recourſe to; but this I know—the pomp of verſe, the " energy of deſcription, and even the fineſt moral paintings, would ſtand " him in no ſtead. Without *admiration* (which cannot be effected but " by the marvellous of celeſtial intervention, I mean the agency of ſu- " perior natures really exiſting, or by the illuſion of the fancy taken to " be ſo) no Epic poem can be long-lived. I am not afraid to inſtance in " the Henriade itſelf, which, notwithſtanding the elegance of the com- " poſition, will in a ſhort time be no more read than the Gondibert of " Sir W. Davenant, and for the ſame reaſon."

Letters on Chivalry and Romance, Letter X.

I have thus ventured to confront theſe eminent critical antagoniſts, that, while they engage and overthrow each other, we may obſerve the injuſtice produced by the ſpirit of ſyſtematical criticiſm, even in authors moſt reſpectable for their talents and erudition.—Here is the unfortunate Voltaire placed between two critical fires, which equally deſtroy him. The *firſt* Critic aſſerts that the Henriade muſt be ſhort-lived, becauſe the Poet *has introduced inviſible and ſuperior agents*;—the *ſecond* denounces the ſame fate againſt it, becauſe *it wants* the *agency of ſuperior natures*: yet ſurely every reader of poetry, who is not influenced by any particular ſyſtem, will readily allow, that if Voltaire had treated his ſubject with true Epic ſpirit in all other points, neither the introduction nor the abſence of St. Louis could be ſingly ſufficient to plunge the Henriade in oblivion. Indeed the learned author, who has ſpoken in ſo peremptory a manner concerning the neceſſity of ſupernatural agents to preſerve the exiſtence of an Epic poem, appears rather unfortunate in the two examples by which he endeavours to ſupport his doctrine; for the Epic poems both of Davenant and Voltaire have ſufficient defects to account for any neglect which may be their lot, without conſidering the article of Machinery.

If I have warmly oppoſed any deciſions of this exalted Critic, it is from

from a perſuaſion (in which I may perhaps be miſtaken) that *ſome* of his maxims have a ſtrong tendency to injure an art highly dear to us both; an art on which his genius and learning have caſt *many* rays of pleaſing and of uſeful light.

NOTE II. VERSE 166.

But howling dogs the fancied Orpheus tore.] This anecdote of Neanthus, the ſon of King Pittacus, is related by Lucian. The curious reader may find it in the ſecond volume of Dr. Francklin's ſpirited tranſlation of that lively author, page 355 of the quarto edition.

NOTE III. VERSE 276.

And ſpotleſs Laurels in that field be won.] The Indian mythology, as it has lately been illuſtrated in the writings of Mr. Holwell, is finely calculated to anſwer the purpoſe of any poetical genius who may wiſh to introduce new machinery into the ſerious Epic Poem. Beſides the powerful charm of novelty, it would have the advantage of not claſhing with our national religion; for the endeavours of Mr. Holwell to reconcile the ancient and pure doctrine of Bramah with the diſpenſation of Chriſt, have ſo far ſucceeded, that if his ſyſtem does not ſatisfy a theologiſt, it certainly affords a ſufficient baſis for the ſtructure of a Poet. In peruſing his account of the Indian ſcripture, every reader of imagination may, I think, perceive, that the Shaſtah might ſupply a poetical ſpirit with as rich a maſs of ideal treaſure as fancy could wiſh to work upon.—An Epic Poet, deſirous of laying the ſcene of his action in India, would be more embarraſſed to find intereſting Heroes than proper Divinities.—Had juſtice and generoſity inſpired and guided that Engliſh valour, which has ſignalized itſelf on the plains of Indoſtan; had the arms of our country been employed to deliver the native Indians from the oppreſſive uſurpation of the Mahometan powers; ſuch exploits would preſent to the Epic Muſe a ſubject truly noble, and the mythology of the Eaſt might enrich it with the moſt ſplendid decorations. Whether it be poſſible or not to find ſuch a ſubject in the records of our Indian hiſtory, I leave the reader to determine.—Our great Hiſtorian of the Roman empire has intimated, in a note to the firſt volume of his immortal work, that "the wonderful expedition of Odin, which deduces "the

" the enmity of the Goths and Romans from so memorable a cause, might " supply the noble ground-work of an Epic poem." The idea is certainly both just and splendid. Had Gray been ever tempted to engage in such a work, he would probably have convinced us, that the Northern mythology has still sufficient power to seize and enchant the imagination, as much in Epic as in Lyric composition.

It may amuse our speculative Critics, to consider how far the *religious Gothic fables* should be introduced or rejected, to render such a performance most interesting to a modern reader. Few judges would agree in their sentiments on the question; and perhaps the great dispute concerning Machinery cannot be fairly adjusted, till some happy genius shall possess ambition and perseverance enough to execute two Epic poems, in the one adopting, and in the other rejecting, supernatural agents; for Reason alone is by no means an infallible conductor in the province of Fancy; and in the poetical as well as the philosophical world, experiment is the surest guide to truth.

FINIS.

ERRATA.

EPISTLE II.

Ver. 3, for *where* read *whence*
—— 282, for *Critic* read *Critics*

EPISTLE IV.

Ver. 356, for *keep* read *heap*.
Ver. 372, at the end of the line insert a mark of Interrogation.

ERRATA IN THE NOTES.

Page 133, line 3, for *wore* read *bore*
—— 181, — 10, for *Ninus* read *Nisus*
—— 201, — 8, for *neglio* read *meglio* — for *gindicio* read *giudicio*
—— 208, — 28, for *Aranco* read *Arauco*; and line ult. for *Arancanians* read *Araucanians*
—— 217, &c. for *Lincoza* read *Lincoya*
—— 223, line 20, for *Lantaro* read *Lautaro*.—The Reader is desired to correct this name in different pages, as it is repeatedly misprinted.
—— 286, line 2, for *was* read *were*